Ibele (plur. *matele*), a breast. This includes all who are supposed to be descended from a common ancestress. Often the direct line of descent from the founding ancestress is not known for more than three or four generations. The small groups which can definitely claim to be 'of one breast' constitute the distinct matrilineal groups which live together in separate hamlets within a village. Each is undifferentiated in relation to other matrilineal groups, but internally each is differentiated on the principle of sibling unity.

The main emphasis of the kinship system is on the bond between a man and his sisters. Their relationship is summed up in the word *mbumba* (translated by Mitchell as 'sorority group'). A man speaking of his *mbumba* refers to all the women he calls sister, their daughters, and their daughters' daughters. Strictly speaking, female kin in the ascending generations are excluded, as belonging to the *mbumba* of his mother's brother. The 'warden' of a sorority group, *asyene mbumba*, is the senior of the brothers and is responsible for the behaviour of the women in his charge; he appears for them in court and pays fines on their account. He plays an important part in the marriage negotiations. It is his duty to consult the diviner if his sister or her child falls ill, and to be chief mourner at the funeral of either of them, also providing medicine for the ritual purification at the end of the mourning period. Formerly these obligations were balanced by certain rights. He could sell some of them into slavery for his own personal reasons. This privilege is ended, but even to-day it is through his sorority group that a man achieves status and independence.

The principle of sibling unity is expressed in many other ways. A man and his sister reciprocally call each other *alumbwangu*. More usually, a woman calls her brother, older or younger than herself, *acimweni* (a term of respect usually applied to a chief), for any brother may be regarded as warden of her sorority group. A man has the same duties to his younger brothers as to his sisters, so they also call him *acimweni*, but he calls them *mpwanga* 'younger brother', as they can never be in the position of warden in relation to him. Maternal uncles are called *akwelume*, and a sister's son *cipwa*.

Within each matrilineal descent group, differentiation takes place between members according to whether they are siblings or not. A man's sorority group included ideally his own siblings and their female matrilineal descendants. His sister's daughters are also the sorority group of his sister's son, their brother, so that any woman can belong at any one moment to the sorority groups of her brother, her mother's brother, her mother's mother's brother, &c., but the effective one is that of her own brother, if adult. He is consulted first in small disputes, and at the marriage ceremony each party is represented by a brother as well as by a mother's brother. In the break-up of a hamlet (described below, p. 12), siblings tend to hold together more closely than cousins and to form groups of their own, so that each woman in the descent line is a potential point of cleavage. Tension between brothers as they compete for control of the sorority group is a source of friction within the sibling group which eventually leads to its disruption.

Since marriage is mainly matrilocal, and extra-village, the husband in his wife's village is seen as a stranger by all the members of her matrilineal descent group. There is a tendency for members of such descent groups to live together in a cluster of huts. The word 'hamlet' is used by Mitchell to indicate a cluster of huts, in which

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

every adult member is a matrilineal descendant of a single ancestress, or a spouse of one of these people. All husbands are called *alamu* by the male members of the descent group, but husbands call each other by the kinship terms for older and younger brother (i.e. *acimwene* or *mpwanga*) according to the seniority of their wives. Similarly undifferentiated in kinship terms are the wives of all men of the descent group, who call each other 'sister'.

The husband is expected to work in his wife's garden, to help his mother-in-law, and also, in the early stages of marriage, to avoid her. His attitude to his father-in-law is one of respect, relaxing as time goes on. His attitude to his wife's brother is also one of respect, which covers feelings of latent hostility. Although husband and wife's brother co-operate in affairs relating to the woman and her children (e.g. they jointly consult the diviner in case of illness, and the brother-in-law hears grievances the husband may have against his wife), there are elements of conflict arising from their competition for the affection of the woman and her children.

Patrilocal marriages are the rule in certain cases. The village headman commonly has his wife in his own village. At his death his widow may return to her own village, but if her daughters have married locally she may stay, and one of her sons, as warden of his sisters, will also stay and marry patrilocally, as did his father, the headman. Thus a new matrilineal descent group, linked to that of the headman by a patrilineal link, develops. In every generation the number of separate but related matrilineal descent groups would double, and at such a rate of proliferation it might be expected that any village would contain many family groups. In fact, however, most members of a village can trace their descent from a common ancestress removed not more than about five generations. There are two reasons for this degree of homogeneity in the kin-grouping in the villages. One is that the villages tend to split up as they become too large and complex. The other is that the introduction of a new matrilineal descent group is often avoided by a cross-cousin marriage by the headman of the village or the warden of a sorority group.

There is a joking-relationship between cross-cousins, that is, for example, between the village headman's children and his sisters' children. The latter, as members of his descent group, have interests and loyalties opposed to those of his own children. Although there is a strong tradition of cross-cousin marriage, such marriages are said to be likely to be unstable.

Betrothal and Marriage

Child betrothal was common among the Yao. Acceptance of a loin-cloth and the wearing of it was token of betrothal, giving the groom exclusive rights over the girl.[1] The negotiations for an adult marriage are conducted by senior matrilineal kinsmen of the parties, who at the subsequent ceremony act as witnesses or sureties to the marriage. Usually the senior is the mother's brother, and the junior the brother. The act of validation, the *Cinyamwe* rite, takes place some time after the husband and wife have been living together. They meet in the hut of the woman for the rite, which consists in eating two pots of porridge, prepared by the female relatives of each party. The man's people bring a cockerel and the woman's a hen for relish. The exchange of food symbolizes the exchange of members of each matrilineal kin group, which is

[1] Macdonald, 1882a, vol. i, p. 118; Johnston, 1897, pp. 411–13.

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

expressed also in the speeches by the marriage sureties. The couple are exhorted to refer disputes to the sureties, and to consult the diviner in case of sickness.[1] After the rite these two sureties have special responsibilities towards the couple; grievances are referred to them, and they must be present when adultery cases are heard in court. If the marriage witness ceremony has not been performed, the relationship is not regarded as legal and no adultery compensation can be claimed by the husband.

Divorce used to be a private affair, which was merely signalized by one party giving to the other an arrow as a token of separation.[2] Nowadays all divorce cases go to court. The woman is usually asked to choose between her husband and the adulterer, and the compensation paid to the former, if she decides to leave him, is higher—amounting to about 10*s*. A man can be sent away from the village by his wife's kin, but if he has given no grounds for divorce he can claim compensation and will also take back any gifts made to his wife. A few small gifts to his mother-in-law are not reclaimed. Divorces are easily obtained and frequent. Grounds for the divorce of a man may include failure to pay hut tax, one of the specific duties of the husband.

The custom of making a marriage payment is recorded by Johnson[3] (on the east coast of Lake Nyasa) as a relatively new adoption. When given it is divided between the bride's father, mother, and mother's brother and brother.[4]

Slavery

Domestic slavery was an important institution in the Yao social system. Slaves were obtained by capture, purchase, or in compensation for injury.[5] A man would pay a debt by giving slaves (wives or members of his matrilineal kin group) to his creditors.[6] A man might voluntarily enslave himself to a man having charge of many women, as a means of obtaining a wife.[7] The children of a free man and a slave woman were not emancipated, as their father could not take them from the village of their mother's master, who had the right to sell them.[8] Slaves took part in the ordinary life of the village; women slaves ranked as junior wives of their masters and shared the usual work of women. Men might be supplied with guns for hunting or might accompany their masters to war, trade for them, spin, weave, sew, make baskets.[9] The institution of domestic slavery was an expression of a dominant motif in Yao culture—the association of status with a large number of dependents. Its abolition by the British was in itself a major blow to the prestige and authority of the chiefs.

Information about the social organization of the Yao in Portuguese East Africa is scanty, but it is in agreement with what is known of the Nyasaland Yao; Heckel, who knew the Yao in Lindi district, Tanganyika Territory, confirms the correctness of Stannus's account of the South Nyasa Yao.

The Yao came into Nyasaland in small parties of kinsmen. Their experience and their superior weapons soon enabled them to dominate the Nyanja among whom they settled, and today they dominate the population of the Southern Province. They are organized into loose groups of villages, under petty, independent chiefs. They seem

[1] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 245; Hynde, 1893; Johnson, 5, 1922, pp. 69–73; Macdonald, 1882, vol. *i*; Werner, 1906, pp. 129–32.
[2] Werner, 1906, pp. 132–3; Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 237.
[3] 1922, pp. 72–3.
[4] Stigand, 1909, p. 122 (not a reliable source).
[5] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 280.
[6] Macdonald, 1882, vol. *i*, pp. 166–7.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 280.
[9] Werner, 1906, p. 273.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM IN ITS ECOLOGICAL SETTING

The Problem

At a joint meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute and the International African Institute in 1948, Gluckman said: 'Many District Officers have described the village headman as the invaluable Non-Commissioned Officer of native administration. Yet despite various references in earlier literature to his important political, legal and ritual responsibility for his dependants, there has not yet been an adequate appreciation of his key position in the social structure.'[1]

In this essay, I have tried to examine this problem in relation to one of the tribal groups in British Central Africa. Gluckman pointed out that one fact among the diverse characteristics of Central African peoples is constant—people live in villages. This was observed by the earliest travellers in the region, who gave the English word 'village' to the groupings of huts they saw, and so this important point passed imperceptibly into the descriptions of the social organization of the peoples. Yet, perhaps because of its very obviousness, it is an interesting fact that no studies have been made of the position of the village as such in the social structure. It is clear that Lozi villages[2] and villages along the Luapula River, where the environment sets a stamp on the village composition,[3] are different from Nyakyusa villages where boys of one age-grade strike out to found a new village,[4] or from Ngoni villages where a diversified set of kinsmen

[1] Gluckman, M., Mitchell, J. C., and Barnes, J. A., 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, xix, 2 (April 1949), 89–106.

[2] Gluckman, M., *The Economy of the Central Barotse Plain*, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper, No. 7 (1941), and his contribution to the symposium, *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, eds. Colson, E., and Gluckman, M., Oxford University Press for the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (London, 1951).

[3] Cunnison, I., *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*. Communication from the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, No. V (Livingstone, 1950).

[4] Wilson, G., 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, x, 3 (1936), and Wilson, M., *Good Company*, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute (London, 1951).

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

adhere to a headman whose position is fixed in an historically determined hierarchy.[1] Yet it stands the test of observation that there are in all tribes of this region small concentrated settlements of people who look upon themselves as groups, and who play an important part in the political activities of the community.

In my analysis of the social structure of the Yao, I have taken the village and tried to see it as a unit in a larger field of political relations. I have also tried to see it as a unit in itself, internally differentiated. I have taken the district under the jurisdiction of a Native Authority as the whole, the universe, which is to be resolved into parts. Before the British forces subjugated the tribes of Nyasaland, there had been a period of intensive tribal movement and intertribal warfare. Some groups had gathered around successful warriors and maintained their identity; others had been broken and dissolved by stronger forces. The British conquest ended the period of military adjustment, and for administrative purposes the country was divided into districts. Within these districts some adherents gathered around their former leaders while others preferred to remain where they were. Tribes such as the Nyanja, who were the original inhabitants, remained in residence; newcomers such as the Lomwe immigrated from Portuguese East Africa. But when the Administration later officially recognized chiefs in these districts it was the successful Yao invaders who were recognized and not the indigenous Nyanja or immigrant Lomwe.

While the war-making units of the Yao—the tribal groups under numerous chieftains—were broken up by the British forces, the smaller component units, the villages, survived. From early records and from the tales told by old men who can still remember something of the pre-White days, we know that the people have always lived in villages, though their structure has probably changed since those days. The villages were far and away the most important social units within any of the chiefdoms. The 'village' was and still is a key concept in Yao thought. I shall demonstrate later that it was the smallest group acting in the political field. At the same time it was, and still is, the field in which kinship was most significant. This is why I have taken

[1] Barnes, J. A., in his essay 'The Fort Jameson Ngoni', *Seven Tribes, and Politics in a Changing Society*, Oxford University Press for the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (Cape Town, 1954).

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the village as the fundamental unit in my description of Yao social structure. I have tried to describe other social groups in a village context: for example, how lineages and families make up the village; how the religious congregations, particularly the Moslems, still organize their relationships on a village basis; and so on.

The position of the village in the social structure therefore has to be analysed from two aspects. Firstly, it is a unit within an organized whole—the chiefdom. Secondly, the village itself is a whole, with its own structure and morphology. Dividing the total structure into two sections and considering the village both as a part of a whole and as itself an organized whole, simplifies description. In fact, there is one continuum of social relationships, and the internal organization of a village reflects its position in the total structure. For example the fission of a matrilineage is significant in both the fields of kinship and politics, since through it kinsmen separate and found new villages.

Throughout this essay I use the word 'village' to mean both a concentration of huts and a social group. The two ideas are inseparable in Yao thought and it will be clear from the context of the sentence which meaning I intend. A word of warning is necessary here for those who are familiar with Administrative terminology in Nyasaland. The Administrative use of the word 'village' is different from mine. To me a village is a discrete cluster of huts occupied by a group of kinsmen who recognize their own identity against similar groups. The Administration has for its own purposes classified the population of each district into 'villages' under remunerated 'village headmen'. Very frequently these do not fall directly within the scope of this study. Wherever I refer to the villages in the Administrative sense I shall use the phrase 'Administrative village'; otherwise the word 'village' refers to the indigenous social group which I have defined.

In order to burden the reader with as few strange-sounding names as possible, and to spare him the task of learning many general village backgrounds, I have tried as far as possible to draw my illustrations from two villages, Ali Kasunka and Cikoja.[1]

[1] These names and the names of most of the characters in this book, except those of the well-known chiefs, are fictitious, so that their anonymity might be preserved.

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soon erected. As early as 1893 the Protectorate was divided into Administrative divisions and Collectors were appointed in each. Coinage was issued; a hut tax of 3*s.* was introduced; European claims to land and mineral rights were settled with the chiefs—all large estates were issued with certificates of claim; and a postal system was initiated. The old order of independent chiefdoms had gone for good and the Africans had to adjust their way of living to a new order.

The Village as a Unit in pre-White Times

Though there are earlier records of villages among related tribes, the earliest we have of the Yao are those of Livingstone.[1] In the records of his journeys up the Shire and the Rovuma Rivers, he states that the people lived in villages. Rowley's reports[2] of the Shire Highlands in 1861 show that the Nyanja were organized in villages similar to those of to-day, but the best reports on the Yao village are by Duff MacDonald, who worked as a missionary in the Shire Highlands and the Zomba area from 1878 to 1881. Duff MacDonald published both a general ethnographic account of the Yao around Blantyre and a journal of day-to-day events on the mission. From these descriptions we are able to reconstruct much of the political organization of Yao groups before the Whites came to Nyasaland. Though the information from these early accounts about the internal structure of villages is scant, the reports of the importance of domestic slavery are good, and this is valuable in assessing its effect on the internal structure of modern Yao villages.

From MacDonald's description it appears that each Yao chiefdom was a congeries of almost autonomous villages. The headman of these villages recognized the superiority of one of their number whom we may call 'chief'. The unity of each village and its corporateness were expressed in many ways. One of these was in connection with the worship of ancestor spirits. MacDonald writes:

> [The village headman] is the recognized high priest who presents prayers and offerings on behalf of all that live in his village. . . . It

[1] Livingstone, D. and C., *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries, and of the Discovery of Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa. 1858-64*, John Murray (London, 1865). Waller, *Last Journals*.

[2] Rowley, *The Story of the Universities Mission*.

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began to appear in the Territory. The chief in this situation had the same wants as his subjects but was in no way able to satisfy them. He was precluded by his position from becoming a labourer and thus securing a cash income, while his subjects, until recently dependent on his monopoly for their wealth, had been drawn into the new economy of the Protectorate and were comparatively affluent.

The cessation of warfare and slavery thus affected the prestige of the chiefs seriously. The Administration's policy was at first to impose a fine of guns on those who broke rules. In July 1894, for example, Chapola village on the south-west corner of Lake Malombe was fined 30 guns for being in possession of slaves.[1] Later the Administration introduced an ordinance requiring the registration and licensing of guns, and many guns were confiscated on account of breaches of this regulation. Not only were the Yao disarmed, but the Administration also punished those who broke the peace. At the same time the Government was pursuing an active policy against domestic slavery. For example, in the village of Chapola mentioned above, 26 slaves were released. The slaves, formerly bound to their masters by the physical sanction of being liable to death at his hands in cases of desertion, were now liberated. It is not surprising to find the Collector at Mlanje reporting, in 1895, that the power of Kuntirimanja and Matipwiri was failing, and that they were losing people.[2]

Statements of informants confirm that slaves were then starting to leave their erstwhile masters to set up villages of their own. In 1904, the Administration reported: 'The tendency is for the old large communities to be broken up; for the small man to collect a surrounding of friends and go off and build new hamlets in other localities'.[3]

From my own investigations, there appear to have been two possible reasons for this. First, communities may formerly have lived in consolidated groups in order to protect themselves from slave-raiders and other assailants. With the disappearance of the slaver and of war, the bond of the need for security would,

[1] *B.C.A. Gazette*, i, 10 (July 28th, 1894).
[2] *B.C.A. Gazette*, ii, 8 (June 15th, 1895).
[3] *The Annual Report of the Territory, 1903–4*, quoted by S. S. Murray (ed.), *Handbook of Nyasaland*, Crown Agents for the Colonies (London, 1932), 188.

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therefore, be weakened, and the component parts of the village scattered. This is what the Administration argued when it wrote about the split-up of communities: 'This tendency is to some extent gratifying, in that it originates in the native's sense of his complete security under the existing Government.'[1] I have not much evidence that this is true, and in fact do not think it is. Second, there is little doubt from my village histories that the slave-groups attached to various village headmen were deserting their former masters and setting up independent villages.

It is significant that the report speaks of the 'old large communities'. Duff MacDonald, writing of the Blantyre area in the period 1877–81, says: 'Usually the natives live in small villages containing 10 or 11 huts, occasionally in large villages containing three times as many. They do not like to pack themselves closely. In time of peace few villages contain more than 100 people.'[2] Hynde, writing of the Domasi area, says: 'Sometimes a village consists only of five or six huts; more commonly twelve or twenty and rarely above thirty. The chief's village at Domasi consists of more than 100 houses but that is an exceptional case. The villages occur at intervals of quarter to one mile.'[3] In July 1895, the Collector at South Nyasa made a census of all the villages on the west bank of the Shire (64 villages). These were mainly Yao, but also included some Nyanja. The modal size of villages, calculated from his published figures, is 26 huts.[4] The reports of MacDonald and Hynde agree well, although they describe different areas. The Collector's average was slightly larger, but one is not sure that he has not included two or three settlements under one headman. A village, Changali, was marked as having 217 huts, but a note indicated that they were scattered. Also the numerical accuracy is not above question because a large proportion of hut totals end in 0 or 5, indicating estimation rather than enumeration. From my own observation, the arithmetic mean of a sample of 37 villages in two separate areas was 11 huts (mode was 8 huts).

It seems, therefore, that the optimum size for Yao villages has always been about 10 to 15 huts, and that the disintegration

[1] *Annual Report of the Territory, 1911–12*, Murray, *Handbook*, 128.
[2] MacDonald, *Africana*, i, 145.
[3] Hynde, R. S., 'Among the Machinga People'.
[4] *B.C.A. Gazette*, ii, 3 (Sept. 1895).

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noted by the Administration in 1904 was in fact the break-up of larger communities under important village headmen. These communities were, as is evident from MacDonald's writings, largely made up of slaves and their descendants. In the light of the internal structure of modern villages, I believe that the fragmentation going on at that time was due to the breaking of the bond between captor and slave—a bond formerly reinforced by physical sanctions that included the killing of a slave by his captor. Therefore, while the groups thus linked to the headman may have moved out of his village, his matrilineal kinsmen, who were bound to him by bonds of deep sentiment and religious beliefs, remained. The irreducible 10 to 15 huts were therefore likely to have been those of the headman's own matrilineal kinsmen. When the Administration ascribed the continuing tendency all over the Protectorate to the splitting up of villages into small family groups [1] it was probably describing the splitting off of descendants of slave-wives to found villages of their own. While this process of readjustment was going on, the Administration stepped in with legislation designed to control what it considered to be unchecked social disorganization. The Administration spoke of the necessity to

> build up an organization to control the rising generation of natives who, finding themselves without the restraining influences to which their parents were accustomed, have of recent years evinced an inclination to emancipate themselves from the disciplinary responsibilities of village life and obedience to authority, and to adopt habits prejudicial to native family life.[2]

To accomplish this task the Government introduced the District Administration (Natives) Ordinance of 1912. This was the Ordinance about which the Administration wrote in 1913:

> Framed, as it has been, in accord with native ideas and practice, it is a measure which none the less avoids the defects of the archaic system of tribal rule and which has as its aims the gradual formation of a subsidiary local government by means of Sectional Councils of Headmen chosen as far as possible by natives themselves and presided over by the District Resident.[3]

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[1] *Annual Report, 1911–12*, Murray, *Handbook*, 128.
[2] *Annual Report on the Protectorate for 1912–13*, Murray, *Handbook*, 129.
[3] Murray, *Handbook*, 129.

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Under this Ordinance, the Administration provided first of all for the formation of 'villages'. A Rule made under Section 3 of the Ordinance and published in Gazette Notice No. 113 of 1913, gave the Resident the power to concentrate the native population, where necessary, into organized villages of not less than 20 huts and to disallow the erection of isolated huts. 'In order to give effect to this policy the erection of new huts was to be confined to existing villages, and the occupants of isolated huts were to be instructed to remove, as opportunity offered, to an approved village.'[1]

The Ordinance then proceeded to create a line of authority from the District Resident to the villagers through Village Headmen and Principal Headmen. Districts in the charge of Residents were divided into Administrative Sections. A Principal Headman was put in charge of each. The Sections in turn were sub-divided into Village areas (groups of villages), each in the charge of a Village Headman.

Under the Ordinance, Principal Headmen and Village Headmen were given specific duties and responsibilities in their respective areas. The Principal Headman, for example, was:

> to be responsible for the good order of his Administrative Section, the maintenance of discipline, the reporting of crime and the apprehension of criminals, sanitation, the control of the movement of cattle, reporting outbreaks of epidemic disease, and for any other matters in the interest of law and order and the general welfare of the native community.[2]

The Principal Headman was also to 'secure the attendance at the Magistrate's court of natives whose presence was required in connection with deceased estates, remittances, government labour and so on, and to exert his influence to accelerate the payment of hut and poll taxes'. These duties in turn devolved upon Village Headmen—they were responsible for their smaller areas as the Principal Headmen were responsible for the larger.

Unfortunately we have no information about the way in which Principal and Village Headmen were chosen. Murray records that

> Residents were not necessarily to recommend those natives who had hitherto been recognized as Chiefs or Headmen. It was considered

[1] Murray, *Handbook*, 132.

[2] Murray, *Handbook*, 130.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

CHAPTER III

THE COMPOSITION OF MODERN CHIEFDOMS

Chiefdoms in the Administrative Mould

361 NO less than in MacDonald's time, modern chiefdoms are in the first place organizations of villages. Physically, the villages consist of solid pole and daub huts of varying sizes. [342] Some huts are rectangular, twenty feet long and fifteen feet wide, with glass windows, panelled doors, and thatched roofs. Others are small and round, about eight feet in diameter. There is also a considerable variation in the compactness of villages: often the huts are only a few yards apart, but sometimes at least a hundred yards or more. Most villages, however, could be circumscribed by a circle of a quarter-mile diameter, though, of course, there are many exceptions. There is a slight tendency for the village to spread itself along a path, in a way faintly suggesting ribbon development, but on the whole there is no particular physical pattern to the Yao village. In fact, though most villages have fairly distinct physical boundaries, and are definitely discrete clusters of huts, some are difficult to identify in this way. To the minds of the local people, however, the ● 621 village is quite clear and distinct. This is because they see the village primarily as a social unit, and tend to impute into physical boundaries more definition than actually exists. It is in the social sense that I use the word here: the 'village' is a spatial group which recognizes its identity against similar groups.

The importance of the village in Yao structure can hardly be over-emphasized. Membership of a village provides the first index whereby people determine a stranger's background. If, after village membership is fixed, no other links can be found with a stranger, such as distant kinship, the relationship will remain at that level. A gossip identifies the person about whom 621 he is speaking by giving his or her name and the name of his 551 or her village. He says, 'Bt.[1] Mwana of Cigwaja village'.

[1] I use this abbreviation for the Arabic 'binti', 'daughter of'. Binti, pronounced 'biti' by the Yao, with Ali and Wadi, 'son of', appear commonly in Yao names.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

The chief identifies a man who comes to see him in exactly the same way, and the Administration has adopted a similar system, except that it has its own definition of the village. During the initiation ceremonies, the initiands [1] are housed in long grass sheds which are subdivided into sections. Each section or room of the long shed houses the boys or girls from one village. If villages share a burial ground, they have allotted portions where they bury their dead separately. In these and many other ways the village is looked upon by the Yao as a distinct unit in the chiefdom.

The chiefdom in the old days was distinctly a territorial unit and all the villages within that area recognized the superiority of the chief. The boundaries of the old chiefdoms were marked by rivers and hills and fixed after conquest and agreement. They are still well remembered. Modern chiefdoms are defined in their limits partly by Government decree and partly by custom. When Principal Headmen were appointed, the districts under them were demarcated with 'due regard being given to the composition of the Native population'. The traditional areas under the various chiefs, therefore, were recognized by the Administration as districts, so that the districts or their sections almost coincided with the chiefdoms. Some disputes between chiefs over boundaries have occurred from time to time and the Administration has had to arbitrate. For example, the Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province reported a difference between Liwonde and Kawinga in 1936,[2] but through time these differences have been eliminated.

Traditional and Administrative boundaries do not coincide in a few places, for two reasons. Firstly, the Administration has accepted an obvious and physical boundary in preference to an indistinct and social boundary. It has taken the Domasi River as the boundary between Ntumanje and Mposa, though in fact a few villages under Mbela, Kawinga III's son, live on the south side of the river, and fall for Administrative purposes in Ntumanje's area. Mbela is still very strongly associated with Kawinga in ritual and kinship matters. His dealings with the

[1] I am grateful to Prof. Schapera for suggesting this word for those who are undergoing initiation ceremonies. The parallel is with graduands, i.e. those who are undergoing graduation ceremonies.

[2] *Report of the Provincial Commissioner, Southern Province* (1936), 20.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

advocates the more orthodox type of Islamic devotion in which a quiet restrained manner is emphasized. As far as I know the *twaliki* sect are confined entirely to Jalasi's chiefdom and the *sukutu* to Kawinga and Liwonde. In this matter, Nyambi's people side with Kawinga's and Liwonde's.

On the other hand, local informal organization is well developed so that Chiwalo who is at the point of juxtaposition of Kawinga, Liwonde, Nyambi and Jalasi chiefdoms, may try cases involving headmen from any of these areas, and they usually accept his arbitration. His is the nearest court house. The actual boundaries of the four areas, however, are very clearly recognized and Chiwalo realizes the limits of his jurisdiction. Though he may arbitrate in a difference between headmen, he would not dare to apportion land outside his area. Headmen living on the boundaries of two chiefdoms arbitrate in each other's cases; the villagers under them intermarry. A village in Chiwalo's may procure garden lands in Jalasi's area, and children may be initiated at ceremonies held by headmen in other chiefdoms. There is no clear break in the normal social relationships of people across the boundaries of chiefdoms, and their members interact as freely with each other as members of two villages of the same chiefdom. The cleavage between the villages on different sides of the boundary of a chiefdom becomes apparent only in special situations.

The formal relationships of the chiefs, set by the history of their conquests and their kinship, and incorporated in and slightly modified by the Administrative framework, are overlaid by an informal local organization where the interaction of village headmen only conforms to the formal pattern when no agreement can be reached.

The Position of the Modern Chief

In ritual situations a chiefdom is clearly differentiated from its neighbours, and many of these situations arise in the cult of tendence on the ancestor spirits. The ancestor cult has fallen away almost completely among village headmen, but among the chiefs it is still strong, and appears particularly in the rain-prayers and the initiation ceremonies. Later, I shall discuss at length the importance of the chief's sanction before headmen may conduct initiation ceremonies. This is because the spirits

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643 him about the laws it intends to introduce which affect his people. The Administration transmits new Ordinances and Regulations to the chief and he must then relay them to the village headmen. When it advises the chief of a new law it thereby advises the people of his chiefdom.

The Origin of Villages in Modern Chiefdoms

195 We have thus far been looking at the chiefdom as an organ-
621 ization of villages united by their common interests in and association with one chief. But the villages that compose the chiefdom are not all equally closely integrated into the political structure. This is most clearly seen against the background of how the modern chiefdoms came into being.

175 By the time that the 1912 Ordinance was introduced the social
621 composition of the chiefdoms had undergone some change from
563 what it was before the White conquest. Before the White conquest the Yao chiefs had overcome the indigenous inhabitants of Southern Nyasaland. Some of these had been allowed to remain in the area as subjects. Others were enslaved. There were some Nguru, Nyanja and Mpotola village headmen who had come to seek the protection of the Yao chiefs.

175 During the conquest, the territory was thrown into confusion,
621 and villages fled in abandon from their own into neighbouring
166 chiefdoms both in Southern Nyasaland and Mozambique. When the Administration allowed the chiefs to return, most of the important village headmen and their followers returned with them. Kawinga, for example, was allowed to return, not to Mount Chikala but to the area immediately to the north of it. He brought back with him most of his important headmen who had fled with him to the country of the Mpotola chief Nkanyela, in Mozambique. Jalasi was allowed to return from Portuguese Territory in 1906,[1] not to his mountain fortress Mangoche, but to a smaller hill Sakalwe some miles to the east. He gathered round him a few of his important headmen.

When hostilities ceased, there was a certain amount of internal readjustment. Some villages which had fled to other chiefdoms in the Protectorate started to come back while others stayed behind. To-day there are villages here and there which had left their chiefdoms in the confusion and had then joined their present

[1] District Book, Fort Johnston.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

chiefs. Mpumbe's village, which in 1947 was about 2½ miles from Kawinga's court village Nanyumbu, was originally one of Jalasi's adherents. Mpumbe fled with many others when the British attacked Mangoche in 1896. He went to the place where Lake Amaramba spills into the Lujenda River in Portuguese East Africa. When things seemed more peaceful, Mpumbe did not return to Jalasi's area, but preferred to seek his son Ngongondo, who had fled with a section of the village to Kawinga's area. He found Ngongondo at approximately the present site of the village, and settled with him. Ngongondo later moved eastwards to his present home in the Liwonde area. Both village headmen have achieved a certain amount of prestige in their new chiefdoms. Mpumbe was once a court assessor of Kawinga, and now holds girls' initiation rights. They have lost all touch with their former chief and are most unlikely to return to him.

A considerable number of Kawinga's villages moved into Mposa's and Chamba's areas, when they returned to the Protectorate. Their descendants to-day say that they did so because the soil was better in those areas than in Kawinga's.

Shortly after the British expedition, i.e. between 1896 and 1900, the Portuguese Government launched a punitive campaign against the Africans along the Portuguese–Nyasaland boundary. Many thousands of refugees came pouring into the Protectorate. Most of these were Mpotola and Nguru. The great majority settled where they crossed the boundary, i.e. round Chiuta, and Ngokwe chiefdom arose from some of them. After the Portuguese campaigns ended many other migrants came into the area. All those I questioned gave Portuguese ill-treatment as the reason for their coming across.

During the first decade of the century the movement, as in the initial invasion, was predominantly south-westwards—from Lake Chiuta towards the Shire River and Highlands. Now, however, the movement is gradual. The first movement of a group may bring it just within the boundary. Then the next movement may take it to the south and west deeper into Nyasaland. Some of my village case histories show this. Table III sets out some movements within Kawinga–Liwonde area (except Chiwalo).[1] I asked about the place of origin of all the villages

[1] I use Kawinga–Liwonde area to include the chiefdoms Kawinga, Liwonde, Mposa, Chamba, Ngokwe, Chikweo and Chiwalo.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

TABLE III

MOVEMENT OF VILLAGES WITHIN KAWINGA–LIWONDE AREA

● 621
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Losers:	*Gainers:* Ngokwe	Chikweo	Kawinga	Liwonde	Mposa	Chamba	Totals
Ngokwe .	—	—	7	2	—	—	9
Chikweo .	—	—	2	—	1	—	3
Kawinga .	—	—	—	27	1	20	48
Liwonde .	—	—	—	—	—	4	4
Mposa .	—	—	—	2	—	9	9
Chamba .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals .	—	—	—	2	—	—	73 / 2

Totals above the diagonal represent movements south-westwards. Totals below the diagonal represent movements north-eastwards.

extant in Kawinga's section, which had arrived since the White conquest. My enquiries about the headmen who are recognized by Government were easy, but for those who are not recognized I had to rely on the memories of my informants and I know that many were left out. I am not aware of any bias, but realize that wide generalization from the figures is not safe. A glance at Map II shows that Ngokwe area is the most north-easterly area and Chamba the most south-westerly. The others are intermediate. Of the 75 villages only two had moved counter to this direction, i.e. from Mposa to Liwonde in a north-westerly direction.

I have no measure of the number of villages which have moved entirely out of the Kawinga–Liwonde area, either to other parts of Nyasaland or back to Portuguese East Africa. I have never heard of a village's moving back to Portuguese East Africa, though I have heard of their moving westwards and southwards, and of a few moving northwards.

In Table IV, I set out the origin of villages which have arrived in Kawinga–Liwonde area since the White conquest, and which are still there. This table shows quite clearly, that by far the biggest influx into these areas has been from Portuguese East

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

TABLE IV

ORIGIN OF VILLAGES WHICH HAVE ARRIVED IN THE KAWINGA–LIWONDE AREA SINCE THE WHITE CONQUEST AND ARE STILL THERE

Origin	Ngokwe	Chikweo	Kawinga	Liwonde	Mpoza	Chamba	Total
Northern Areas:							
Fort Johnston . . .	—	—	—	6	—	1	7
Nyambi	—	3	—	1	1	2	7
Jalasi	1	—	10	6	1	3	21
Southern Areas:							
Malemia and Ntumanje	—	—	—	8	7	28	43
Zomba	—	—	—	4	7	4	15
South of Zomba . .	—	—	—	2	1	3	6
Other Nyasaland Areas:	—	—	—	3	—	2	5
Port. E. Africa . . .	13	76	111	37	6	30	273
Unrecorded	—	—	—	2	1	31	34
Total	14	79	121	69	24	104	411

Africa. We have no record of how many villages have been lost to the Southern or Northern area from Kawinga–Liwonde area, so that we cannot evaluate the significance of the gain of 64 villages from Southern areas, and of only 35 from the Northern areas. The density of population in Malemia's area is 268 per square mile, and the average density of the Shire Highlands is about 156·6. It may well be that there is now a movement out of the Shire Highlands into the less densely populated Liwonde–Kawinga area.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIMACY

Migration and invasion have been the keynote of Machinga histories: village headmen recount with pride how their ancestors moved into Nyasaland with their bands of slaves and followers. 'The East' is the traditional home of the Yao and even young men who have never been there proudly say, 'We come from the East'. This sentiment is reflected in the belief that the rains from the east are beneficial and give rise to good crops, while the rains from the west are detrimental and cause

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

is when it is used by an Administrative village headman, as I shall illustrate later, it will not serve a minor village headman much to move out of one chiefdom to another if his object is to become recognized as an Administrative village headman. If he goes to another chiefdom he is automatically regarded as one of the most junior of the headmen. If he goes to another chiefdom as an Administrative village headman already, he takes with him his 'book' and to some extent the rank associated with it.

The size of Administrative villages as measured by the number of tax-payers in them is about equal in all three categories of village headmen. Table X sets out the distribution. The

TABLE X

DISTRIBUTION BY SIZE OF VILLAGES UNDER ABORIGINAL, INVADER AND NEWCOMER ADMINISTRATIVE HEADMEN

Tax-payers	Totals			Total	Percentages			Total
	Aborigines*	Invaders	Newcomers†		Aborigines	Invaders	Newcomers	
0–19	6	29	56	91	30·0	21·3	22·0	22·2
20–39	7	49	85	141	35·0	36·0	33·5	34·4
40–59	2	25	57	84	10·0	18·4	22·4	20·5
60–79	3	16	29	48	15·0	11·8	11·4	11·7
80–99	1	1	13	15	5·0	0·7	5·1	3·7
100–119	1	6	4	11	5·0	4·4	1·6	2·7
120–139	—	4	4	8	—	2·9	1·6	2·0
140–159	—	1	1	2	—	0·7	0·4	0·5
160–179	—	1	1	2	—	0·7	0·4	0·5
180–199	—	1	1	2	—	0·7	0·4	0·5
200–249	—	3	—	3	—	2·2	—	0·7
250–300	—	—	3	3	—	—	1·2	0·7
Totals .	20	136	254	410‡	100·0	99·8	100·0	100·1
Mean .	39·0	48·5	45·1	45·9				
S.E. .	8·7	4·2	2·8	2·2				

* Excludes one village whose size was unknown.
† Excludes 3 villages whose sizes were unknown.
‡ The total excludes an additional 10 villages for which full details were not recorded.

Administrative villages of the Aborigines, mostly Nyanja, appear to be rather smaller than those of the Invaders and Newcomers.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

There were only 20 villages in that sample and the difference may not be significant though the distribution is skewed to the smaller villages. The mean number of tax-payers under Invader village headmen was slightly larger than that under Newcomers, but the difference was not significant.[1] Among the Invaders are included the chiefs and *ndunas* who usually have villages of over 100 tax-payers. Smaller villages are less likely to break away from chiefs and *ndunas* than they are from Newcomers and less important men.

Village headmen may exploit their connections with the chief in their competition with their fellows for Government recognition. In Tables XI to XIV inclusive, I have used the material I collected in Mposa, Chamba, Chikweo and Ngokwe areas only, because I know that my survey did not include many headmen in Kawinga and Liwonde areas. The total in these tables includes both Administrative and non-Administrative village headmen. From Table XI it is clear that there is a

TABLE XI

PROPORTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE HEADMEN AMONG ALL VILLAGE HEADMEN OF THE THREE CATEGORIES IN CHIKWEO, NGOKWE, CHAMBA AND MPOSA AREAS

Type of Headman	Aborigines	Invaders	Newcomers	Total
Administrative . . .	12	61	77	150
Non-Administrative .	1	37	111	149
Total	13	98	188	299
% Admin. Headmen.	92·3	62·2	41·0	50·2

$n = 2$; $\chi^2 = 21{\cdot}34$; $p = 0{\cdot}00002$.

significantly greater proportion of headmen of Invader descent than headmen of Newcomer descent who are recognized as Administrative headmen.[2] The percentage of Aborigines who are Administrative headmen is highest of all but it is based on such a small number that not much value can be placed on it.

[1] Diff. of means = 3·4 ; S.E. of diff. = 4·5 ; C.R. = 0·76 ; $p = 0{\cdot}4472$.
[2] Diff. of per cent = 21·2 ; S.E. of diff. = 6·07 ; C.R. = 3·49 ; $p = 0{\cdot}00048$.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

TABLE XII

PROPORTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE HEADMEN AMONG ALL VILLAGE HEADMEN WHO ARE RELATED AND NOT RELATED TO THE CHIEF IN CHIKWBO, NGOKWE, CHAMBA AND MPOSA AREAS

Type of Headman	Relatives		Non-Relatives	Total
	Direct	Clan		
Administrative . . .	38	36	76	150
Non-Administrative .	16	24	109	149
Total	54	60	185	299
% Admin. Headmen.	70·4	60·0	41·1	50·2

$n = 2$; $\chi^2 = 17{\cdot}23$; $p = 0{\cdot}00018$.

Table XII shows that among the chief's direct relatives (i.e. those who can trace some direct link, matrilineally, patrilaterally or affinally to the chief) there are more Administrative headmen than among the relatives who are related only through clan links. Further, it shows that there are more Administrative headmen among the chief's relatives as a whole than among those headmen who are not related to him at all.

It seems probable also that village headmen have used their link to the chiefs through religion to prosecute their claims to rank. From Table XIII we see that there are more Moslem

TABLE XIII

PROPORTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEADMEN AMONG ALL VILLAGE HEADMEN OF THE SAME RELIGION AS, OR DIFFERENT RELIGION FROM, THAT OF THE CHIEF (ISLAM) IN CHIKWBO, NGOKWE, CHAMBA AND MPOSA AREAS

Type of Headman	Moslem	Christian	Pagan	Total
Administrative . . .	113	27	9	149
Non-Administrative .	93	31	21	145
Total	206	58	30	294*
% Admin. Headmen.	54·9	46·6	30·0	50·2

$n = 2$; $\chi^2 = 6{\cdot}97$; $p = 0{\cdot}03078$.

* Excludes 5 village headmen whose religion I did not record.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

Administrative headmen than either Christian or Pagan. The chiefs, of course, are all Moslem.

Lastly, the same trend is seen among those headmen who are of the same tribe as the chief, against those who are of other tribes (Table XIV). Here, however, the difference is so small

TABLE XIV

PROPORTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEADMEN AMONG ALL VILLAGE HEADMEN OF THE SAME TRIBE AS, OR DIFFERENT TRIBES FROM, THE CHIEF IN CHIKWEO, NGOKWE, CHAMBA AND MPOSA AREAS

Type of Headman	Same Tribe	Different Tribe	Total
Administrative	85	65	150
Non-Administrative	76	73	149
Total	161	138	299
% Administrative Headmen .	52·8	47·1	50·2

$n = 1$; $\chi^2 = 0.95$; $p = 0.3422$.

that it may easily have arisen by chance. These factors, however, do not operate independently. There are more co-tribesmen, co-religionists and relatives of the chief among the Invaders than among the other categories. In other words, the factors are all intercorrelated and it is possible to consider any particular factor as the independent variable. From the point of view of the people themselves, to be an Invader is to have one of the best claims on the chief to become an Administrative headman.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SCARLET HEADBAND

Government recognition therefore provides the means whereby headmen are ranked in two major categories. But Administrative village headmen themselves are ranked by a number of prestige-indicating characteristics. The most important of these are the right to wear a plain scarlet headband and the right to hold boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies.

Of these two additional marks of rank the more important is the right to wear the scarlet headband. This headband is wrapped round the head, turban fashion. Most village headmen wear a headband of some sort, either of white or coloured cloth,

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

CHAPTER V

THE VILLAGE HEADMAN

Villages as Discrete Units

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THE village headman is a key personality in Yao social structure. Viewed as an organization of villages, the social structure may be described in terms of the positioning of village headmen in relation to each other and to the chief. But the village headman is a representative of a corporate group, the village. The position he occupies in the structure as a whole, the rôle he plays in his interaction with other village headmen and the chief, and the prestige that he has in the community as a whole, are all derived from the village of which he is the representative, and in particular from the history of the dominant matrilineage of that village.

I am now considering, of course, all village headmen, however small their villages are, and not only the Administrative village headmen, as in the previous chapter. Each group which sets up a village recognizes one man as the 'owner' or warden of the village (*asyene musi*). The word '*musi*' (pl. *misi*) in Yao, refers primarily to the physical concentration of huts, but it is impossible for the people to separate in their minds the dwellings in a village from the people who inhabit them. In Yao, a deserted village is no longer 'a village'. It is called instead *lisame* (pl. *masame*),[1] a word which refers now not to the village as a unit, but to the collection of deserted and individual huts. The word *musi* or its diminutive form *kamusi* may be applied to a cluster of only four or five huts, or at the other extreme it may be applied to a large concentration of more than 500 huts.[2] The essential point is that the cluster of huts is occupied by a group of kinsmen who are independent of their neighbours. For example, a stranger may see a cluster of huts and ask, 'Whose village is that?' The reply may be, 'That is no village, they are only homesteads.'[3]

[1] From the verb *kusama*—to migrate.

[2] Large complex villages may also be called *msinda*.

[3] *Mawasa* (sing. *liwasa*), which I have translated as 'homesteads', strictly speaking refers to the households set up by married men.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

Further enquiries may reveal that this is only a section of a larger village, possibly a hundred or more yards away.

The boundaries of a village may not always be clear. Clusters of huts which are part of one village may be physically nearer another, but in the minds of the Yao, who see not only the huts but also the social relationships of the people occupying them, there is no confusion at all. As a general rule the villages are fairly compact and clearly demarcated from others, and even strangers have no difficulty in recognizing the autonomy of the group which is expressed in many different ways. MacDonald recorded that formerly a headman performed a certain amount of ritual which symbolized the unity of the village.[1] Much of this has fallen away, but the unity remains.

The ritual surrounding the foundation of a new village bears testimony to its persisting political significance. In this ritual the unity of the group, against other similar groups, including the village from which it has sprung, is expressed. On first arrival at a new village site the men build grass sheds, beginning with that of the headman. That night the headman pours a cone of sacred flour at the root of a tree on the site, and asks the spirits of his ancestors whether the site is propitious. Early next morning he examines the cone to see the answer. If a side of the cone has collapsed it does not augur well and another site is selected. If the cone is still whole it is taken that the spirits acquiesce, and permanent huts can be started. The headman then goes into the bush to find medicines[2] which he mixes with groundbeans. That night, with the medicated groundbeans in the hut, the headman has intercourse with his wife. In the morning those who are not sexually active come to the headman's grass shed to drink some water in which the medicine has been steeped and eat some of the medicated beans with a little porridge, which the headman's wife has prepared from the sacred flour. This medicine is called 'the medicine to strengthen the village' (*mtera wakulimbika musi*). Until then all members of the village should have been continent but after this sexual relationships may be resumed. The object of the medicine is to prevent those

[1] See pp. 31–2.

[2] *Nkulungutu* and *nkuta*, two plants commonly used for protection against *ndaka*. See f.n., p. 112.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

who are sexually inactive from contracting *ndaka*.[1] At the same time the headman gives each household a piece of the fire which has been newly kindled in the traditional way by rubbing two sticks together.

The mystical danger inherent in the act of setting up a new village is well brought out in the propitiatory prayer and the abstinence from sexual intercourse. Once again it is the village headman who must make the offering to his ancestors; and it is the village headman who has intercourse with his wife so that the effluvium from his sexual activity may permeate the medicine in the hut and so protect the villagers from *ndaka*. Lastly, it is very important that the whole village cooks and is warmed by one fire. 'We are of one fire' expresses the common origin of two villages; though in fact every time a new village is founded a new fire should be kindled. To bring fire from the village of origin is to bring sorcery, since the Yao believe that sorcery can operate between persons closely linked by kinship only. To have one's own fire is to be autonomous from other groups.

The Burdens and Rewards of Headmanship

MacDonald had the perspicuity to see not only that the village headman was the representative of a corporate group and that he represented this group to outsiders, but also that he represented external authority to his villagers. The village headman who in his person stood for the unity of the group, performed certain ritual acts which emphasized this, such as praying to the village ancestors. In spite of the decline of the ritual his position is still regarded as exceptional. Much, however, depends on the rank of the village headman. There may not be much difference in ritual observances and mystical dangers between a headman who has in his charge a meagre three or four huts, and a commoner. In the larger and more important

[1] This is one of the most important mystical concepts of the Yao. I have described this condition and its implications more fully in *Marriage among the Machinga Yao of Southern Nyasaland* (R.-L.I. Paper), forthcoming. Briefly it is a disease characterized by œdema which affects those who are sexually inactive when they are suddenly brought into contact with a person, or an object which he has touched, after having intercourse. The people most affected are the young and the old, i.e. those who cannot have sexual intercourse. Those who are capable of intercourse are expected to have ritual intercourse with a stranger, and so fortify themselves against this dread disease.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

of sorcery, but the representative takes no part in the proceedings at all; he is outside them and is there merely to see that affairs are conducted fairly.

The Value Attached to the United Village

The third aspect, the dominant theme in all speeches, is the emphasis on the position of the headman as a leader of a corporate group, and his duty to maintain its unity. The chief and the officiating headmen warn the successor about the possibility of conflict in the village. They advise him to settle differences at once lest these should lead to a split in the village. They also warn him that his wife's relationships with her sisters-in-law, living as she is, virilocally,[1] are a danger point and may lead to trouble. The danger from the 'husbands' who are members of other villages and whose loyalties do not lie directly with the new headman is made manifest to him. At Nyenje's ceremony the officiating headman remonstrated with Nyenje's sisters because some had left the village without giving him an opportunity to settle their differences. The frequent references to the danger of sorcery are also references to the fear of the breakdown of the village. The villagers are exhorted to respect the headman and to be obedient to him for the general welfare of the group as a whole. Regularly the image of the tree and its branches is invoked, and it is made clear that the headman is dependent on his people for his rank and status, and they on him for their unity.

The disintegration of a village in Yao eyes is a sad affair and the disruptive forces in it must be very strong before a section leaves it. People who want to leave a village are usually remonstrated with and told not to 'break' it. In the frequent conflicts between the headmen and their younger brothers the arbitrators usually try their utmost to prevent a migration. They always award compensation to the injured party and tell the disputants to live in peace, and not to leave the village. Frequently, however, the leader of the dissident group prefers to refuse the compensation money, which is often as much as £6 or £7, and

[1] i.e. living with her husband's kin. I use 'virilocal' and 'uxorilocal' in preference to the older but ambiguous terms 'patrilocal' and 'matrilocal'. See Richards, 'Some Types of Family Structure amongst the Central Bantu', 208-9.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

strike out with his adherents to found a new village. A sum of £6 or £7 is a considerable amount in everyday Yao life where the annual cash income of the average individual is not much more. The leader of a dissident group is prepared to forgo this wealth to get one foot on to the lowest rung of the political ladder—that is by becoming a village headman.

Obversely there is a great deal of sentiment attached to the idea of a united village. To the Yao way of thinking a village is broken by fighting or death, and these evils are linked by witchcraft beliefs. The association of death and the break-up of the village is brought out clearly by the funeral ablutions of villagers after the burial of one of their number.[1] An important ingredient in the medicine with which the mourners wash themselves after the funeral, is *cikula*. It is the earth from a particular type of termitary which is usually about 12 to 18 inches high, upright and almost cylindrical. The crust is very brittle and it is comparatively easy to chip off a piece. When this is done a mass of internal chambers and passages is revealed. The soldier ants, unlike those of other species that retreat into the darkness of their passages as soon as they are exposed, come into the open daylight and swarm in confusion over the fractured termitary. When I questioned my informant about *cikula*, he kicked the crust off the top of one of the hills and said, 'See all the houses in the village of the ants? I have broken their village. So *it* is with death. It breaks the village.'

The Yao believe that death 'breaks the village' and that conflicts through sorcery lead to death. Therefore, conflicts are the real cause of village splits. Hence differences must be settled immediately if the village is to persist, because if they last too long one of the aggrieved parties is sure to start using sorcery against its opponents. Those who do move away, go to a distant place because they believe that sorcery operates only where there is social interaction. But the fear of sorcery on the other hand is just as strong a force in maintaining the physical unity of the village. It is while the migration is being planned that sorcery is most likely to be used. This is particularly so if the village break is taking the form of a lineage split. This happened, for example, in Lupunje village.

Kalambo, the sister's son of Lupunje, wanted to leave the village and had gone to seek a suitable site. When he returned he found that

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621 626 753 his mother was ill and had gone with Lupunje's younger brother to the diviner to find out the cause of the illness. The diviner indicated that Lupunje thought that Kalambo was not showing him the proper respect. Lupunje knew that his sisters had lost their value in the lineage since they had stopped bearing children, whereas Kalambo's sisters were still reproducing. His malice had caused the woman's illness. When Kalambo got home he asked his mother's brother to blow water out of his mouth [1] and help him to prepare some medicine for the sick woman. This Lupunje did and the woman recovered immediately.

Shortly afterwards Kalambo remonstrated with his mother's brother for causing the illness of his sister, but Lupunje said that he had no control over it: the spirits had brought it on her. Kalambo knew that he could do nothing and abandoned the idea of building his own village. He knew that there was bound to be more illness if he carried on with his plan.

182 621 626 Clearly the belief in the mystical powers of the ancestors or of sorcery is a force which prevents sections from breaking away from the village. A break follows only when opposition within the village has reached sufficient pitch to force one of the sections to take the risk of illness, rather than to continue living in the village. Sometimes the dissident group comes back because further deaths at their new village site convince them that their action was wrong.[2]

Effects of the Headman's Personality

622 Whether a village maintains its unity or not, depends very largely on the personality of the headman. This is why the officiating headmen and others at the installation ceremonies are so insistent that cases should be settled quickly. The main duty of a headman is to maintain harmonious relationships within his village and to see to the welfare of its members. All severe [787] illnesses are immediately reported to him, and so are the results of all divinations. He usually sends his representative to divina- [764] tions concerning kinsmen not related to him matrilineally. He is immediately notified of all deaths and he organizes the funeral 622 692 rites. Squabbles are brought to him for arbitration and even where squabbles are settled by kinsmen in the village, usually the headman is formally told of them. Frequently marriage diffi-

[1] An act which means malice. See Chap. VI, p. 139.

[2] See the case history in Chap. VI, p. 133.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

a severe drought, and he claimed the rights over it. One day in 1930 some boys from Mapata village came down to the pool with fish-poison. At about noon some boys from Cikoja's village arrived with their traps. When they saw the Mapata boys using fish-poison they told them to desist and tried to take away the fish. This led to a fight in which knives were drawn. One of Cikoja's boys ran back to tell him, and in anger he came down to the pool with some adults. The Mapata boys now ran back to Masimbo who immediately assembled some men and came to the assistance of the Mapata boys. The two groups joined battle immediately and there were casualties on both sides. Mapata heard about this and came running down to separate them.

The next morning they took the dispute to Chiwalo. He started by asking why Mapata had used fish-poison in someone else's pool without permission. Mapata replied that he did not know that his boys had gone down there. He said that Masimbo had told him about the conflict and that he had gone down to stop it. He was not aware of it before. Chiwalo now turned to Masimbo and said, 'Masimbo, you are in the wrong. You have caused the children to suffer. You went to make war because of your children. The people of Mapata, they are in the wrong because they did not report to the owner of the pool.'

When Cikoja was asked if he had anything to say he only replied that he was ashamed of what had happened because he was the first in the area, and until then they had been friends. The conflict had arisen because the children had done something which they did not know was wrong.

Chiwalo ordered Masimbo to pay 5*s.* and Mapata 6*s.* to Cikoja. He then told Cikoja that he should brew some beer and share it with the other two villages so that friendship might be restored and the children might go from village to village without fear. The chief's instructions were carried out and normal amicable relationships were re-established.

The way in which the villages acted as corporate groups is well illustrated by this incident. The responsibility of the village headmen for the activity of their members also emerges. The chief found Masimbo in the wrong for causing the fight, but he also fined Mapata because his boys had used fish-poison. The fines were paid by the village headmen, Masimbo and Mapata, to the village headman Cikoja, for they are the representatives of the corporate groups under them.

In no other field of village relationships is the corporate

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

identity of villages more clearly seen than in the arguments that arise over rights over waterholes. These are usually dug next to a stream or a marsh, or in some other place where the water will percolate into them. The physical labour of digging a waterhole establishes the rights to it, and a village retains these rights if at some time in the past any of its members had dug it.

In normal years, and of course during the rainy season, there is enough water for all and no friction arises, but in drought years difficulties arise. Friction between Nampeya and Cikuwita arose in this way in 1933.

During the dry season the waterholes that were normally used were drying up and the people of Nampeya decided to open up a disused one. When Cikuwita's people saw Nampeya's people using it they came to use it too. Nampeya's women saw this and told the other people they had no right to use the waterhole. Words passed between them and eventually there was a tussle between the two groups, during which a waterjar of one of Cikuwita's women was broken. Cikuwita's women said they would take the case up to Ntibwilibwi, a headman of local importance, and when they returned to their village they complained to their headman who took the complaint to Ntibwilibwi. He sent a message to Nampeya to arrange a date on which the dispute might be settled. On that day the members of the two villages gathered at Ntibwilibwi's hut. The dispute was settled amicably: the person who broke the waterjar was ordered to take a chicken and give it to the owner of the jar, and Cikuwita was told to gather his people the next day and make them dig a waterhole of their own.

The villagers in each of these situations had acted with regard to their fellows primarily as members of villages. They had seen themselves as members of corporate groups and had interacted as such. In the dispute in which the jar was broken, the individual responsibility was fixed and compensation awarded, but at the same time the village headman was instructed on behalf of his villagers to make a new well and thereby ensure peace in the future. In all these disputes, however, the headman had appeared as the responsible representative of his village.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

CHAPTER VI

THE LINEAGE FRAMEWORK OF VILLAGES

Matrilineal Kinship

TO outsiders a village appears to be an undifferentiated whole and in interaction with other villages it acts as such. But within the village, social actions are determined by membership of kinship groups whose genealogical relationships to each other differ from one village to another. The village headman who represents the unity of the village is usually a kinsman of all the villagers, but the links to him are different and diverse. Yet he commands the leadership of the village, not so much by his kinship to the villagers, for a villager may have other mother's brothers and fathers in the village, but by his position in a political structure, where he represents the village to outsiders and to external authority.

Yao social groups are organized on a principle of matrilineal descent but we shall see that, although this is the main principle, it is modified by the general political mould into which villages are forced. We have already seen that, at least in the lines of important headmen, clan-names are inherited from the mother.[1] This is the simplest and most direct way in which matrilineal descent affects social relationships. The principle of matrilineal descent is far more important in organizing the smallest group which acts corporately within the village—the matrilineage.

A significant feature of Yao social structure is that the village organization tends to cut across lineages. In the process of segmentation of matrilineages, which I shall discuss in detail later, new villages are formed. When this happens the dissident kin usually set up their homesteads a good distance from the original or parent village. The links between different sections of the same matrilineage, therefore, tend to become lost, and the new village, conscious of its own identity and unity, gradually loses its links with the parent village. The general structural relationship between the villages as wholes, and their headmen as their representatives, is fixed at the time when the division takes place, and this is remembered. But the actual genealogical

[1] See Chap. III, p. 71.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

621 links are usually forgotten, so that the two villages are known to
613 be related, but it is not certain how. The matrilineages to which the two headmen belong recognize this forgotten link and they refer to this relationship as *ulonga ŵakumbuna*, which I can only translate as 'distant relationship'. In Cikoja village, for example, the headman's matrilineage, or as I shall call it, dominant matrilineage, is related to at least two other villages. These are Mbande and Cibwana Kawinga, both in Jalasi's area. The links with these two groups cannot be remembered. The first Mbande and the first Cikoja, I am told, had the same mother. Neither the present Cikoja nor any of his villagers could remember the genealogy earlier than the fourth Cikoja. A section of Mbande village, nevertheless, lives in Chiwalo's area near Cikoja and there is a fair amount of co-operation between the two villages to-day. Cibwana Kawinga is by the same explanation a 'mother's brother' of the present Cikoja; he is called in whenever there are serious disputes in Cikoja's village, and brings the force of a senior relative to bear on Cikoja.

621 People who are thus vaguely and distantly related may express
613 their kinship in many ways. For example, they say that they are
601 'the people of one founding ancestor or ancestress'. They may say that they are *acina Masumba*, 'the people of Masumba', or *acina Nkopo*, 'the people of Nkopo'. Masumba and Nkopo here may be either a woman from whom they are descended, or a man who was the leader of the group when they first moved into the area. Where a man is mentioned as the founder the term is used for the descendants of the man's sisters. But like most terms for social groups its meaning changes in different contexts. In another context, for example, *acina Cikoja* means simply the people of Cikoja village and has no reference to matrilineal descent at all.

Other terms are more specific. The word *mpago* may be used in the sense of one type or kind, as *pampago pano*. An arbitrator at an intra-lineage dispute said, for example, 'You people who have a case are people of one kind [*ŵandu pampago*].' The word *cipapo* may be used in much the same way. But even here the reference may be to the entire span of matrilineal relatives whose relationship is vague and uncertain (*ŵakumbuna*); or it may refer to a section of relatives having one known ancestress; or it may even refer to a segment within the section.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

Among the relatives of the largest order of kinship (*cipapo*) there is a bond only slightly more intimate than that among people who have the same clan-name. There are none of the jural and moral obligations which characterize membership of a matrilineage which is a part of a village. The larger group, for which there is no exact Yao term, may be looked upon as a maximal lineage. It is characterized by a relationship of a more definite bond than that of having a common clan-name, but the members may still marry.

The Matrilineage

It is within the village that the matrilineage operates most clearly. The distant matrilineal link which connects villages such as Cikoja, Mbande and Cibwana Kawinga, is set in a context of inter-village relationships and is therefore part of the political system. Within the village the matrilineage becomes a corporately acting group of a different dimension. It is in this order of lineage within the village that we have the set of relationships described by Professor Fortes as applying to the inner lineage[1] among the Gold Coast Tallensi.

The depth of a matrilineage within a village is seldom more than five or six generations from the founding ancestress to the new-born children. The name of the founding ancestress is remembered and the descent of each member of the matrilineage can easily be recounted. The ancestress is known as the *likolo* or *lipata*, words which also refer to the trunk of a tree. We have seen how at a headman's installation ceremony the image of a tree was invoked in describing the lineage.[2] We find it once again here, where the founding ancestress is seen as the stem or root from which all members of the lineage have sprung, and the various sections of the matrilineage are seen as the branches (*nyambi*). This symbol of the lineage appears also during offerings to the ancestors. The chief, or headman, in

[1] See Fortes, M., *Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, Oxford University Press (London, 1945), and *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, Oxford University Press (London, 1948). The Yao system of lineages is not the clearly segmented type of structure characteristic of the Tallensi. I hesitate, therefore, to use Fortes's terms, and use *matrilineage* for the localized unit which is usually a component of a village.

[2] See Chap. V, p. 119.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

making the oblation, pours the beer or sprinkles the flour at the root (*lipata*) of a shrine-tree. As would be consistent with this way of looking at the lineage, genealogically-distant ancestors are said to be 'below' (*pasi*), so that if a Yao wishes to say that a certain person was a matrilineal ancestor many generations back, he would say that he was 'very much below'.

The Concept of 'The Mother'

The matrilineal descendants of the founder look upon themselves as having been fed from the same breast and may express this by saying 'we are of one breast'.[1] Deep sentiment is attached to the idea of the mother among the Yao. There is, for example, a sharp distinction drawn between those women who have had children and those who have not. When a woman becomes pregnant for the first time, she is given instruction in child welfare when she undergoes a special ceremony (*litiwo*). This is a ceremony which is publicly announced and attended by most of her matrilineal and other kinswomen and acquaintances. No woman may attend this ceremony if she has not herself had a baby. Thus her change in status in the community is clearly shown by the public recognition of her condition, and the fact that she is initiated into secrets which are shared by other mothers only. Her position in the lineage is much enhanced when she becomes a mother. It is the most important step towards becoming a village founder herself.

The concept of 'the mother', in general, also appears in the boys' initiation ceremonies. Certain phases of ceremonies may be conducted only with the help of the women. They have to clap the rhythm to which the 'tailmen'[2] do their dances. Here all women are classified as 'mothers' and without their co-operation the ceremonies could not be conducted. During the same ceremonies three women appear with baskets of food on their heads. The tailmen remove the baskets and sacralize the

[1] *Tuli peŵele pamo.* The word *mlango*, a doorway, is also commonly used. The idea in essence is exactly the same. It is the concept of the children who come to settle around a woman's hut door. It is used as *ŵandu pamlango pao*, the people of his lineage section.

[2] The *m'mchira.* These are the functionaries in the initiation ceremonies. They carry medicated zebra tails during these ceremonies, and this gives them their names. See especially Stannus, 'The Wayao of Nyasaland', 229 ff.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

613 769 178 memory of the ancestors. These are called *sadaka*[1] and are similar to those held at the end of the mourning period. They are usually held when one of the lineage members has had a dream about an ancestor. The senior members are told of this and interpret it to mean that a feast in his memory should be held. The women cook a meal of mush and relish and on an appointed day the members of the matrilineage who live within a reasonable distance gather at the village of the senior section and share the feast. During this feast Islamic texts are chanted in Arabic. It is clear that in this situation the context of the meeting is exactly the same as that of the old offerings made by the lineage leader at the shrine-tree. The common ancestor is recalled and the matrilineage by meeting reaffirms its solidarity.

The Localized Matrilineage

613 621 The matrilineage may itself be localized in the form of a hamlet or small village, as in Ali Kasunka village. It has 9 huts situated about half a mile from Chiwalo's court house in Kawinga's area. The genealogy, hut plan and census are set out in Appendix B. I summarize the genealogy here to show how the hut owners in the village are related. The village is about 300 yards across and about a quarter of a mile from the main road.

Ali Kasunka (C6),[2] the warden of the village, formerly lived in a village known by his mother's brother's name Msilo (B1). Ali Kasunka is the son of the chieftain Mposa in Kawinga's area. The village of Msilo still exists in Mposa area. Ali Kasunka and his sisters moved out of Msilo village and established a hamlet in Malemia's area near Zomba township. While they were there Ali Kasunka went to work as a domestic servant in Zomba. One day the sister of the cook in the household in which he was working came down to visit her brother. She became Ali Kasunka's second wife (he was already married to a woman from Malemia area) and lived with him in Zomba. She was the daughter of the present chief Chiwalo, and was living at her

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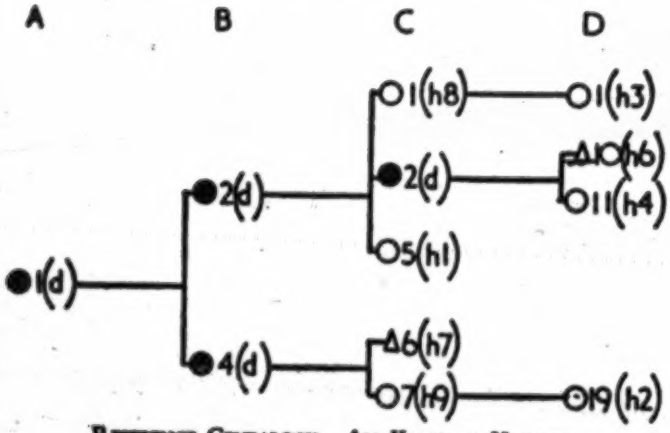
[1] Sanderson says that this is derived from the Arabic word *sadaqa* which means 'alms'. Sanderson, M., on 'Ceremonial Purification among the Wayao, Nyasaland', *Man*, xxii, 55 (June 1922), 91–3.

[2] The reference number is to assist the reader to identify the person on the genealogy in Appendix B.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

village of birth in Chiwalo's before going to Zomba. After six years, when the land round Ali Kasunka's village in Malemia's had become exhausted, he decided to move the hamlet to Chiwalo's and selected a site about a mile from the hut of his second wife. This is where the village has been since 1940.



Reference Genealogy. Ali Kasunka Village.

Considering the matrilineage in detail: although Ali Kasunka's mother's mother is known, her collaterals are not, and Ali Kasunka's mother's mother's only sibling was her brother Kasembe. This genealogy is, therefore, built up from Ali Kasunka's mother's mother (A1). She had three daughters. One (B6) died before she had any children. Nyangu (B2), one of her other daughters, has two surviving daughters, Mbalasyao (C1) and Biti Kasembe (C5). Nyangu's other daughters, Amaliama (C2), Amwikonde (C3), and Amasingati (C4), all died when the village was at its present site. Amasingati died before she had any children.

Mbalasyao's (C1) daughter, Biti Mtuwa (D1), is in the village. Nalolape (D2) accompanied her husband to Cholo, where he went to work in 1947. Yahaya (D3), Ajida (D4), and Atwabi (D5) have all married uxorilocally. Taimu (D6) is unmarried and is away working for an Indian transport driver in Zomba, and Idi (D7) is working for a local Indian storekeeper as a domestic servant. Loni (D8), a girl of about 8 years, sleeps in her mother's hut.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

613 621 Amaliama (C2) had five children before she died. The eldest Golosi (D9) is dead but he had married out before he died. The second, Mwanace (D10) has married virilocally and occupies hut 6. He has no children. Nyangu II (D11) has taken the name of her mother's mother (B2). She has gone to her husband's village with her five children, because he succeeded to a village headmanship in Mposa's area. Alieje (D12) is in the village and has three children, Kasonga (E9), Undeje (E10), and Amale (E11). All of them have not yet reached puberty and they sleep in their mother's hut.

Before she died Amwikonde (C3) had only one son, Mboga (D14), who is now about 5 years old and is cared for by his mother's elder sister, Mbalasyao (C1), in whose hut he sleeps.

Amasingati (C4) died before she had children.

Biti Kasembe (C5) is still living in the village (hut 1). She had only one daughter, Biti Sale (D15), who is in the village and who in turn had two sons, Taibu (E12), who died in infancy, and Rajabu (E13), who is an infant.

The other main section of the hamlet is made up of the descendants of Nyangu's sister Abeda (B4), who had six children. Ali Kasunka (C6), who is the warden of the village, is married uxorilocally about half a mile away at the village of his second wife. His first wife who was living virilocally has recently gone back to her village in Zomba to look after the children of her late elder sister. Ali Kasunka does not expect her to return. He had three children by her. They were Biliate (D16), who is married out, and two children who died in infancy. His children by his second wife live with her in her village. Ali Kasunka's sister Atawile (C7) had in all fourteen children of whom only Biti Mtemula (D19) survived infancy. She is living in the village (hut 2) and has had two children of whom only Wilson (E14), now aged 7, has survived.

Ali Kasunka's other surviving sister, Asausyeje (C8), with her 7-year-old child Mboga (D33), has gone to Zomba with her husband who is working there. Twalieje (C9) died before the village moved into this area and before she had children. Twalilemwapi (C10) also died before she had children. Andondonyeje (C11) died while living virilocally and her two sons married near her husband's village and have never lived in Ali Kasunka's village.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

Table XXV sets out the disposition of the adult survivors of this matrilineage.

TABLE XXV

RELATIONSHIP OF ADULT SURVIVORS: ALI KASUNKA VILLAGE

Relationship to Founder	In Village	Married out	Labour Migrants	Total
D	—	—	—	—
S	—	—	—	—
DD	3	—	1	4
DS	1	—	—	1
DDD	4	1	1	6
DDS	1	4	2	7
Females	7	1	2	10
Males	2	4	2	8

In this hamlet Ali Kasunka is both village headman and the senior male member of the matrilineage. He brought the village into Chiwalo's area and he had the responsibility for the welfare of its members. He has to arbitrate in the disputes that arise within the village and he must at least appear at arbitrations where the members of his village have come into conflict with outsiders.

THE CONFLICT OF MALE AUTHORITY AND UXORILOCALITY

Although descent is matrilineal, authority still rests with the men. The senior man by generation and age is the leader of the matrilineage. It is true that there are a number of small hamlets under women. Biti Nkula village is one, Biti Cimeta is another. But even for these villages there is usually a man who can be called in to handle the affairs of the village. He may be a classificatory brother of the village headwoman, or he may be her own son if he is old enough. For example, in Biti Nkula's village, it is her own son Adam who goes to the divinations and finds the necessary medicine when people fall ill. He also attends the court cases involving a member of the village. Adam is married to a woman in Ndiwagani's village about three-quarters of a mile away from his home and he is therefore easily

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

562 591 613 available when needed. When he became a labour migrant in 1945, his younger uterine brother Lipepeje took over the responsibilities. He is married in Ali Kasunka's village, which is about a mile from Biti Nkula's. In Biti Cimeta's village the minor disputes are settled by the headwoman herself. Her younger sister's son is married in a village ten miles away, and he would take over the duties if he could. He is married to his sister's husband's sister, and his sister's husband has threatened if he should try to take his wife home he will in turn take his wife to his home. Rather than stand the loss of a member from his matrilineal village he prefers to remain married uxorilocally. When more serious disputes occur he comes to Biti Cimeta's to settle them.

The principle of uxorilocal marriage is thus in conflict with the principle of male leadership of the lineage. If a man is living too far away he cannot attend to his numerous duties. The conflict can be solved in one of three ways. The first is that the man may marry in a village which is close at hand, and most marriages do take place between people who live near each other.[1] Second, he may marry a cross-cousin who is living in the village, albeit in another section of it. He need not then move out. Third, he may bring his wife into his village. The last two alternatives are from his point of view the best. He is then living with his matrilineal relatives, and among the group in which he has clearly defined rights and unequivocal status. But his wife's brothers will resist his attempts to take his wife from her village, especially if she is still capable of bearing children. He has to persuade her brothers to let her go with him and if they refuse, or if the woman herself refuses to go, he is helpless. Is he wishes to live virilocally now his only course is to divorce the woman and marry a woman who will live virilocally with him. If he does bring his wife to his village she is kept there by only loose ties of marriage, and on the slightest pretext her male relatives will take her back to her village or she herself will run away home.

562 591 613 The larger the group of relatives to be looked after, the more urgent is the need for the senior matrilineal male to live with his lineage. All the villages headed by females are small. Table

621 [1] 75 per cent of marriages are contracted by people who live within 10 miles of each other. See *Marriage among the Machinga Yao.*

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

XXVI sets out the position of a casual sample of 36 villages in Chiwalo and Nyambi areas. Among the 23 villages which had

TABLE XXVI

SIZE OF VILLAGES UNDER HEADWOMEN AND HEADMEN

Type of Village	Under 10 Huts	Over 10 Huts	Total
No matrilineage male resident .	13	2	15
Matrilineage male resident . .	10	11	21
Total	23	13	36

less than 10 huts each, 13 or 56·6 per cent had no male matrilineage members living in them. Among the 13 villages which had more than 10 huts, only two or 15·4 per cent had no matrilineage male members living in them.[1] The largest village in which there was no matrilineal male had only 11 huts. When the size of the village increases, the senior male matrilineage member tends to move in to live with his wards.

THE SORORITY-GROUP (*mbumba*)

But as the village grows and the duties of a senior matrilineage male become more onerous, a form of organization appears within the lineage which lessens his burden. This takes the form of the differentiation of sibling groups, and is part of the normal process of segmentation which is inherent in any lineage system. Consistent with the Yao idea that men should take care of the affairs of the lineage, sisters look to their eldest brother when they are in trouble. This group of sisters in the care of their brother is called *mbumba*. In the plural *acambumba* the word refers to women in general, but in the singular it refers to a particular group of women in the way I have explained. The word is always used in the sense of 'so-and-so's *mbumba*', as *mbumba ja CeMayele*. The central concept here is the brother-sister link and I have accordingly translated the word *mbumba* as sorority-group.

The man who is in charge of the women, usually their eldest

[1] Diff. of per cent = 41·1; S.E. of diff. = 17·1; C.R. = 2·4; p = 0·0164.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

593 one brother is unsuitable, they turn to another, uterine or collateral, and only if he too is unsuitable do they then turn to other relatives.

The attitude of Naliwa shows very clearly, too, the dependence of the women on the man. They have to wait for his action before they can settle their difficulties. This is part of the general process of internal differentiation within the lineage. The women become organized into small groups, each under the care of a man. These are siblings, so that their common descent, well expressed by the Yao *mucitumbo cimo*, 'in one womb', is the real unifying bond between them. When a Yao wants to express his close link with his uterine sister, that is to emphasize that she is not a collateral or classificatory sister, he stresses that they are from 'only one womb' (*citumbo cimpepe*). Naliwa says that a man who controls his sorority-group so that they live happily together is a happy man. He is happy also because his prestige is enhanced if he is a warden of a sorority-group. Being a warden is the first step on the ladder which leads eventually to independent village headmanship, and the man who has a large sorority-group under him can achieve this aim more easily. Therefore, the warden of a large sorority-group has even higher prestige than a man who has only a few sisters to look after. But the aphorism that 'chieftainship is slavery' [1] achieves significance when a man acquires more dependants.

Segmentation and Fission in the Matrilineage

613 621 The sorority-group organization in the matrilineage assumes most significance when viewed in its political setting. Segmentation and differentiation within the matrilineage consistently leads to splits, hence to village break-ups and the birth of new villages. Fission in the matrilineage usually appears when the wardens of the younger sorority-groups are over the age of 30. At that age each man is adult and therefore old enough to be responsible for his own and his sorority-group's actions and, usually, his mother's brothers, who when alive had kept their younger relatives united, are dead.

The events leading up to a split in a matrilineage usually follow

[1] From Smith and Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia*, Macmillan (London, 1920). For its significance, see Gluckman, Barnes and Mitchell, 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, xix, 3.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

The events leading up to a split in a matrilineage usually follow a definite pattern. Very frequently indeed an accusation of sorcery is involved.[1] This usually stimulates a dissatisfied warden to gather his dependants together and to move off to found a new village. Elsewhere I have set out in detail the typical events which precede a village break-up when the lineage splits after a man quarrels with his mother's younger sister's sons.[2] These splits are not always successful because the seniority of the older relative, especially if he is a headman of some standing, may serve to reunite the village, and the leader of the dissident group may be unable to maintain its independence. This is what happened in Mwambajila village.

613 578 621

Mwambajila is one of the more important village headmen in Jalasi's area. The tension between him and his mother's younger sister's son Mbwana Somu reached a climax after a series of deaths among Mbwana Somu's children. He consulted a diviner and found that Mwambajila was the sorcerer causing these deaths. Mbwana Somu was very angry at this and told his sisters that they ought to leave the village and go to live in Liwonde's area, i.e. about 15 miles away. Eventually he persuaded them to move and they went to live on the Masanje river banks. But the deaths continued. The women now started to be worried because they had left Mwambajila's village

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[1] The implication of this cannot be understood without some knowledge of Yao divining procedure. The type of divining is usually by gourd and object (*ndumba*). The diviner first of all establishes the reason for the visit, i.e. death, illness, theft, or whatever it is. He then consults his gourd and throws into his hand a variety of symbolic objects. He builds a story round these objects, and finally pronounces that he sees some person whom he vaguely defines. The consultor is then asked to mention who this could be. Though sorcery is supposed to be practised mainly in order to get human flesh for ghoulish feasts, it is not believed to act haphazard. In other words, a sorcerer is supposed to select his victims for revenge as well as for meat. The selective processes at work, therefore, when the consultor seeks to reconcile the diviner's findings with his own suspicions, are that he should select someone who is obviously evil, i.e. from his point of view, one with whom he has been quarrelling, and he should appraise the possible motivation for sorcery. After he has made the selection the name is tested by the diviner and the consultor may later submit a chicken to the poison ordeal to test the diviner's findings.

[787 754]

This, of course, confirms Evans-Pritchard's analysis of Azande witchcraft and I here acknowledge my debt to him for stimulus both from his book and from the discussions we have had on the topic. I assume his analysis in my discussion. See Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, Clarendon Press (Oxford, 1937).

[2] In *Seven Tribes*. Case History II, 321.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

613 578 621 as he was supposed to be the sorcerer. Suspicion fell on Mbwana Somu and eventually one of his sisters went back to Mwambajila and complained to him. Later the sisters consulted a diviner and found, as they suspected, that Mbwana Somu was the sorcerer. Thereupon, they returned to Mwambajila and left Mbwana Somu living alone with his wife.

Here is an example of a village which did not manage to maintain its identity but returned to be re-integrated into its village of origin.

578 593 621 Conflicts between collateral brothers are not frequent. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the opposition between lineage segments is usually expressed in a conflict between a man and his mother's brother, a fact which is no doubt related to the opposition of proximate generations. Secondly, lineages seldom persist long enough to contain within them several segments in which collateral brothers are leaders.

Conflicts seem to occur more frequently among uterine brothers, a fact which is significant in the light of the particularly strong bonds which unite them. The relationship between uterine brothers is much the same as that between sisters.[1] They are intimately linked by their bond of kinship and depend on one another for care and support. Usually the elder brother has his younger brothers in his care, in the same way that he has his sisters.

But at the same time they compete for the control of the sorority-group. A man, we have seen, can seek prestige in the indigenous political system only by becoming a village headman. He can become a village headman only by mustering his sisters and setting up a small hamlet with them. The elder brother prevents his younger brothers from doing this because the sorority-group is usually under his care. The younger brother can gain control only if he can persuade his sisters that the elder is a sorcerer, or incapable, or in some way unsuitable for his position. Hence the frequent accusations of sorcery among brothers: it is a rationalization of a hostility arising from the structural position of uterine brothers, which, in view of the commonly accepted strong sentiments uniting brothers, may not be otherwise expressed.

The break-up of Mponda's village in 1940 clearly illustrates

[1] I have dealt with this more fully in my essay in *Seven Tribes*.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

how the opposition of brothers emerges in a situation where the lineage is concerned.

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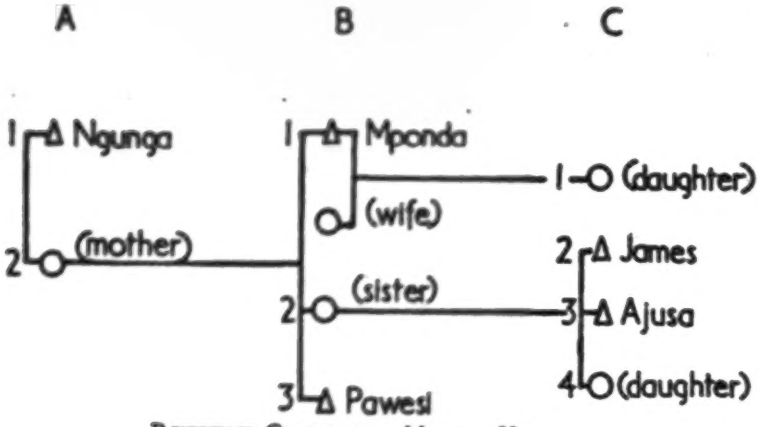

REFERENCE GENEALOGY. MPONDA VILLAGE.

Mponda, a village headman, was married virilocally. One day his daughter went to the pounding point in the village and found that her cross-cousin, the daughter of the headman's sister, was there. A quarrel arose between the two girls over the pounding mortar. Presently they started to fight. The wife of Mponda then came out and caught hold of her husband's sister's daughter and beat her. Mponda's sister had gone to draw water and was just returning. She heard her daughter crying out and ran to the place to find her sister-in-law beating her. The two women had a quarrel about this and separated with bad feelings. The next morning the quarrel broke out again. In the altercation that morning the headman's sister rebuked the headman's wife for behaving in a way which did not befit her position. The headman's wife on the other hand threatened to leave the village if this went on. The bickering continued for some time and eventually the two women came to blows. The headman's sister, who got the worst of this encounter, now decided to take the matter up to the headman. When she told him about it he refused to listen to her complaint. He told her that he had brought his wife to the village and that he did not want to have her treated like a slave. Another sister now chimed in and said that Mponda ought to invite his younger brother along to help him to settle the case. Another recommended their leaving him altogether because he was telling his wife to despise his sisters. To this Mponda replied that the village was his and that his sisters were only children

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

578 and that he could not understand who could be inducing them to
593 talk like this. He told them also that as far as he was concerned they
621 could report the case to whomsoever they wished. The women came out of the hut and went straight to Pawesi who was the headman's younger brother. He told them to go back and to wait a while before they took further action.

578 After four days had passed the headman's sister who had fought
593 with the headman's wife, became ill. In the morning the sisters sent
754 a message to Mponda but he did not come. They sent another
787 message to Pawesi who came and asked if they had told Mponda. They said that they had, but he had refused to come. Pawesi called James and Ajusa, the sister's sons of the headman, and told them that he would tell the headman that they were going to find out the cause of the illness. This they did. The diviner indicated that the headman had caused the illness by sorcery, because of the fight between his wife and sisters. Pawesi tested the divination by giving a chicken some poison. It died, indicating that the divination was accurate. He took the chicken's head to Ngunga who was Mponda's perpetual mother's brother.

When Ngunga heard this he refused to believe it. However, he agreed to send for Mponda and to ask him about it. When he did so Mponda denied the accusation. Ngunga now produced the chicken's head and accused Mponda of being a liar. At that moment a child came to tell them that the woman was dead and the interview ended. They went to the funeral and the next morning they decided to have a post-mortem meeting (*mapeto*) in order to decide the cause of the death. Mitomoni, one of Nyambi's perpetual sons, represented the chief. Ngunga opened the discussion by telling the meeting that the woman had been killed by the headman because of the fight between his sisters and wife. Mitomoni asked how they knew this and Ngunga told of the divination and the poison ordeal. He then asked Mponda if he had heard what had been said and what he had to say. Mponda replied that he knew nothing of it. Ngunga said that Mponda was a bad man and that the others would leave him and he would have to live alone. Mitomoni told Pawesi and Ngunga that they must not leave the village. Ngunga replied that it was impossible to stay there while Mponda was so bad. If the women stayed with him he would finish them all. Pawesi collected 30 of the 40 huts that made up the village and took them away to Chikweo's area, a distance of about 15 miles. Those who stayed behind with Mponda were his 'children' and some unrelated people.

593 This case brings to the fore the position of the younger brother
578 as a constant challenge to his elder for the care of his sisters.

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593 611 sisters are the points of cleavage in the matrilineage and the group of uterine sisters is seldom divided, unless their daughters are old enough to form a corporate group and to move off with their mother to found a new village under their brother.

The Spatial Representation of Lineage Segmentation

361 613 621 The segmentation of the matrilineage is also shown in the spatial distribution of the huts in a village. The daughters of the women of the matrilineage set up their huts near to their mothers', and as this continues over a number of years, the internal segmentation of the matrilineage is automatically reflected in the disposition of huts. Most Yao villages will show this spatial representation of social distance, some more clearly than others. The clearest example I have is in Meni section of Majaja village, Nyambi's area. The disposition of the huts is set out in the village plan in Appendix C. Here are five fairly distinct groups of huts in the village. Four are descendants of four uterine sisters, the children of the previous Majaja. The space between these four groups is cleared and paths reticulate among the huts. About 200 yards away, the fifth group is out of sight of the others and must be reached by a path leading through the fields. In this cluster of huts live the children of the uterine brother of the four sisters. The matrilineal relatives of Majaja live about half a mile away in a quite distinct cluster.

In Cikoja village the same principles are at work but the situation is somewhat obscured by the number of patrilaterally-linked relatives. A glance at the village plan in Appendix D shows that the major segments, denoted by the symbols Ma and Mc in the plan, are quite distinct in the old village site, the huts of Ma being separated from those of Mc by a broad path and by a patch of bamboos. In the new village site across the stream the same general segmentation is shown where the two sections, Ma_1 and Ma_2, are separated by a path.[1] The separation of the clusters of huts is difficult to represent on a diagram because not only are the huts placed in discrete clusters, but they face in towards one another and the space between them is kept clean. Between the clusters there may be rubbish heaps and small garden patches. I describe later how the village continually

[1] I describe how this section of the village came to be across the river on p. 169.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

adjusts itself to the changes in its composition. At this point I wish only to indicate how the differentiation among the various segments of a matrilineage is reflected in the way the members site their huts in a village.

The Segmentary Process

The segmentary tendencies within the lineage are countered by unifying forces, but the cleavages between the lineage sections show up at the slightest provocation. Once the cleavage starts it widens rapidly and charges of sorcery become more and more frequent between the two sections until eventually one moves out to found a new village. A cleavage of this type has been developing in Cikoja village for the last eight years. When I left the field in 1949, talk of migration was in the air but it had not yet happened. I summarize the major events which led to the present situation.

The cleavage first manifested itself in 1942 when Bt. Mbwana (F2)[1] fought with her mother's younger 'sister' Ayesi (E8). These two were pounding at the same place in the village and Bt. Mbwana took Ayesi's flat sifting basket. She retained it for about four days without telling Ayesi that she had it. One day Ayesi saw it at the pounding point and asked Bt. Mbwana where she got it. They had a few words about it and Bt. Mbwana returned it and thought no more of it. She was pregnant at the time and was confined about a month later. It was her fifth child but she had a greatly prolonged labour. After labour had been going on for some hours, Cilimba (F1), her eldest brother, thought that there must be something wrong and sent his two younger brothers, Kausi (F3) and Gwili (F4) to a diviner. The diviner indicated that the cause of the difficult birth was that her 'younger mother' Ayesi was bearing her malice,[2] and advised that Ayesi should blow water from her mouth and declare that she bore no malice. Kausi and Gwili returned and went to Bt. Amina (E4) who was Ayesi's elder sister and told her what the diviner had said. Bt. Amina did as she was advised and fetched Ayesi to the door of the hut in which Bt. Mbwana was lying, and made her confess. The child was born immediately. After a week Cilimba and Kausi brought a complaint to the village headman Cikoja (E7). They accused Ayesi of trying to kill their sister. Cikoja sent a message to

[1] The reference numbers refer to the genealogy in Appendix D.

[2] Difficult labour is usually assumed to be due to adultery, but it may also be due to sorcery or malice. See p. 138, and Chap. VII, p. 183.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

him. The woman in the meantime had run to Chiwalo's hut half a mile away. Here she complained to the chief that Mwanace wanted to kill her. Chiwalo refused to listen to her complaint and sent for Ali Kasunka. When he had come and explained the sequence of events, he continued saying that he would like to take the case to court. Chiwalo, who was Ali Kasunka's wife's father's sister's son (hence a classificatory younger brother) and whose henchman Ali Kasunka was, refused to arbitrate in the case but referred it to Kawinga. On the day of the case the woman's husband came back from the Army. The case was tried and eventually the court assessors awarded a damages claim of £3 to be paid by Mwanace to his sister. The husband, at the same time, said that he could not remain married to her because whenever he saw her he would think that she had slept with her brother and in court he gave Ali Kasunka a marriage termination payment. The tension between Ali Kasunka and his 'sister's son' did not end there however. When they got back to the village Ali Kasunka remonstrated with Mwanace saying, 'Are you not ashamed to have married your sister?' Mwanace said that he could not stand that sort of thing and went back to live uxorilocally.

A crucial point in this case history is that the women did not like Mwanace. Almost certainly there would have been a split in the village had the women had more confidence in Mwanace. The tension between Ali Kasunka and Mwanace, although the conflict is inter-generational, started, as it consistently does, from the relationships of a man to the women of his matrilineage. Without the support of the women, younger brothers or sister's sons are impotent against the power of their senior relatives. It is only when they can induce the women to follow them and to leave their rivals that they can found a new village and thereby begin to earn prestige. Therefore, although the men are the active agents in bringing about a physical act of fission, they are in fact only making manifest a situation which is latent within the lineage.

The position of the senior male matrilineal relative is of fundamental importance in questions involving segmentation. His position is seen most clearly in the dominant matrilineage, in which the name of the village is inherited. The Yao practise 'positional succession'. A man not only succeeds to his mother's brother's name but also to the position of the mother's brother in the social structure as a whole.[1] It follows that when the

[1] See Chap. V, p. 121.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

613 621 successor takes over the name of his predecessor, he assumes the position in the structure of the village as a whole, which was occupied by the first of that name. For example, when Cikoja VI succeeded to the name he moved to the position of Cikoja IV (who founded the village), as far as the members of the village were concerned. He is therefore the senior male matrilineal kinsman in the dominant lineage in the village, and Salimu, in spite of being more senior by generation, must call him mother's brother. The man who succeeds to the name of the founder of a village, or to the name of any important matrilineage member, therefore represents its maximum span to the members. From one point of view he is founding ancestor of the dominant lineage and is, therefore, lifted above the conflicts of the component sections; but from another, since he represents all other sections to any one segment, he is involved in all the conflicts. Cikoja, for example, is the senior marriage surety to all the members of the dominant matrilineage in his village, while the junior marriage sureties are drawn from the component lineage segments. In this way he unites the dominant lineage in that all difficulties are brought to him by the junior sureties. But the junior sureties accuse Cikoja of being a sorcerer when they see him as a representative of an opposed section. Whatever the degree of segmentation within a matrilineage, he is still a mother's brother to them all, and all the component segments are united through him. This is a concept aptly figured in the synonym for a senior matrilineage member, a village headman, or a chief *chikunje* — a bundle of grass; that is, a person in whom many different members are bound into one.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

CHAPTER VII

THE PATRILATERALLY-LINKED GROUPS

The Position of the Husband and Father

MATRILINEAL descent provides the principle on which the smallest of villages, the hamlets, are organized. But not all villages are made up of huts owned by members of one matrilineage as in Ali Kasumka's village.[1] Most villages in fact have a more complex internal organization which may be epitomized as a dominant matrilineage which carries the village headmanship, and a number of subsidiary lineages linked to the dominant lineage by various means. The most common of these is the patrilateral link whereby the subsidiary lineage is connected to the dominant lineage through one of its men.[2] The subsidiary lineage develops in the village from the matrilineal descendants of the virilocally-married wife of one of the men of the dominant lineage, so that the subsidiary lineage, initially at least, are the 'children' of one of the men of the headman's matrilineage. Their peculiar position in the village must be seen in the light of the general position of the father in Yao society.

The father, obviously enough, is also a son-in-law; obvious as this may seem in English it is charged with meaning for the Yao. When parents-in-law refer to their daughters' husbands they use the term *akwegwe*; and they in turn are called this by their sons-in-law. But the *akanwini* are essentially men who are living uxorilocally and *ukanwini* is the general status of being a man in uxorilocal marriage. *Mkanwini* thus cannot be translated into English without periphrasis and I translate it merely as 'husband'. I emphasize, however, that whenever I speak of *husbands* or the *husband* in general I mean 'husbands in uxorilocal marriage'. The Yao assume that marriages as a rule are uxorilocal. Usually the young husband builds a house in his wife's village and is expected to live there for the rest of his life. But

[1] See Chap. VI, pp. 140-3.

[2] I have called this type of village structure the 'dump' in my earlier essay, 'The Yao of Southern Nyasaland', *Seven Tribes*, 132 ff.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

he cannot escape the fact that in his wife's village he is only a 'billy goat' and that his 'true home' is in his matrilineal village. The pull of the matrilineal village on him, therefore, is always very strong and he is constantly trying to return there. His wife's responsible relatives are constantly trying to avoid this because they know that in time they are likely to lose the children who will probably settle in their father's village if they grow up there. In general, therefore, a husband must have a very good reason before he can get his wife's kinsmen's permission to take her and her children to his village. His wife's relatives do not easily yield. But a headman must live in his own village so that nearly all headmen bring at least one of their wives into their villages. Other men sometimes succeed in doing so especially if their wives are past child-bearing, but it is typically the headman's wife who lives virilocally.

The husband's interest in returning to his matrilineal village is heightened by the fact that a man in his wife's village is looked upon as the typical man without prestige: a stranger, whose duty is largely procreative. The theme song at the installation ceremony where the husband was compared with a billy goat, and the common epithet 'chicken rooster' for a husband, reflect the attitude of the Yao towards him. In the song I quoted, the husband was said to be unable to climb high in his village of marriage, however rich he may become.[1] He is, nevertheless, an essential member of the village and the Yao say that it can succeed neither economically nor physically without his aid.

A husband becomes more important when he stays in a village for a long time. He becomes known intimately to the villagers and is conversant with their affairs. He is, therefore, able to advise on many private intra-lineage and intra-village affairs and may even become a marriage surety if there is no more suitable person available. Also in time the husband's position in the village changes. As his children grow up and become active members in the matrilineage, his position of husband becomes supplanted by his position of father, which, in a matrilineal society like that of the Yao, is significant in the same way as that of the mother's brother is in patrilineal societies.

The Yao recognize the close bond between father and child. This bond is conceived to be both social and physical and is

[1] See Chap. V, p. 119.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

of patrilateral kinsmen, so that these bonds are personal and distinctive for each member.

The Development of the Corporate Identity of Patrilaterally-linked Groups

The parent-child relationship is reflected in the structural relationships of a patrilateral group to the dominant matrilineage. Children are less strongly tied to their father than to their matrilineal kinsmen. Usually when a woman dies or is divorced while living virilocally, her children return to her matrilineal village. If the children are too young to express their own wishes, their mother's brother comes for them and they are formally returned to their village of origin. Occasionally children who have grown up in their father's village, especially if they have married their cross-cousins there, refuse to move back to their matrilineal village. They prefer to remain in their father's matrilineal village where they know people more intimately. In time, as they grow older, the women have daughters who may marry uxorilocally and thus a section of a foreign matrilineage begins to develop in the village.

The village as a social unit is more closely integrated when the children who are living there with their father are still young. They do not yet form a corporate group within the village. Their affairs are supposed to be controlled by their mother's brother, but in fact the headman, who is usually their father or a paternal kinsman, may settle many of their minor difficulties and find medicine for lesser illnesses, without bothering their mother's brother. When the children become adults and begin to assert their own wills the position in the village becomes more unstable. As the daughters grow up and marry, their brothers become their junior marriage sureties. If the mother's brother lives far away, the father of the children may be the senior marriage surety. He still has a personal attachment to his children, but his sons' relationships with him may now become affected by structural elements as they tend to interact, with him and others, in certain situations as representatives of corporate groups. As the village develops a son takes over the position of senior marriage surety to the headman's wife's descendants and he becomes the senior male lineage member, while his sisters' sons begin to take over responsibilities for their sorority-groups.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

593 613 621 The headman and father is now no longer directly concerned in the affairs of the linked lineage, and may only appear in their affairs formally as an adviser or an arbitrator in disputes. For example, he is advised of deaths in the village and of the disputes that have arisen and been settled. But this is part of his relationship to the linked lineage because of his headmanship. A fairly long-established village, therefore, contains two, three or four related lineages with complete autonomy in internal affairs yet together forming one community—one village under the leadership of the headman. As the village persists in time and successive village headmen and other men of the dominant matrilineage bring their wives into the village, related lineage segments develop from them, and the internal structure of the village becomes more and more complex.

613 621 An example of a village of this kind is Cikoja. It has 47 huts.

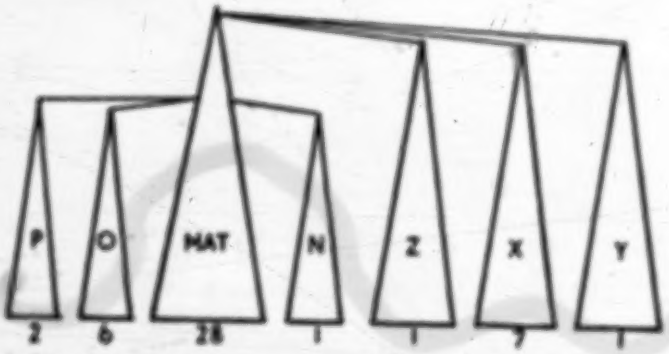

Diagram 4. The Ownership of Huts in Cikoja Village.

One of them is a dormitory for adolescent boys and we may ignore it in this analysis. Members of the dominant matrilineage live in 28 of the huts. Members of patrilaterally-linked groups are living in the remaining 19 huts. There are 6 of these patrilaterally-linked groups in the village and I have indicated them by the letters N, O, P, X, Y and Z. Their origin is as follows:

Z	A descendant of Cikoja IV's first wife	1 hut
X	The descendants of Cikoja IV's second wife	7 huts
Y	The descendants of Cikoja IV's third wife	1 hut

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N A descendant of Cikoja V's first wife . . . . 1 hut 613
O The descendants of Cikoja V's brother's first wife . . 6 huts 621
P The descendants of Cikoja V's brother's second wife . . 2 huts

All these wives were slaves. The present Cikoja has no children.

In this table I have counted huts owned jointly by a member of the dominant matrilineage and a patrilateral group (i.e. in cross-cousin marriage) as belonging to the matrilineage; huts belonging to Z and X group as Z, etc. The exact ownership of the huts is set out in Table XXVII. It shows the number of

TABLE XXVII

OWNERSHIP OF HUTS IN CIKOJA VILLAGE

Origin of wife:	Origin of husband: Mat.	Z	X	Y	N	O	P	Outsid.	Wid.	Div.	Total
Mat. .	—	1	2	—	1	—	—	15	1	1	21
Z . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
X . .	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	8
Y . .	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2
N . .	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	3
O . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	2	5
P . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	2
Outsid.	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	4
Wid. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Div. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	7	1	2	—	1	1	—	29	2	3	46

Mat. = Member of the dominant matrilineage.
Z, X, Y, N, O, P = Groups linked patrilaterally to the dominant matrilineage.
Outsid. = Outsiders or members of other villages.

men and women in the village who are married either to spouses from other villages or from this village, and the men and women who own huts but who are widowed and divorced. The distribution of these huts is set out in the village plan in Appendix D.

We have already seen that the social distance between sections of the matrilineage is reflected in the physical separation of their huts.[1] The social distance between the dominant matrilineage and the patrilaterally-linked groups is much greater than between

[1] See Chap. VI, p. 164.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

613 621 sections of a matrilineage, and accordingly the huts of members of the dominant matrilineage are physically separated more distinctly from the huts of members of the patrilaterally-linked groups than from one another. As they develop their corporate identity the members of each matrilineage tend to build together and a little distance away from the main settlement of the other matrilineages. In Cikoja's village this tendency is seen quite plainly. There are two large patrilaterally-linked groups in the village. These are the children and matrilineal descendants of Cikoja IV's second wife (represented in the plan as N), and the children and matrilineal descendants of the first wife of Maperera, the brother of Cikoja V (represented in the plan as O). These two groups are situated quite separately from the main matrilineal block of the village. The huts of X matrilineage are hidden from the view of the rest of the village and must be reached by a path. The space between huts of O matrilineage and the remainder of the matrilineal block is clear, but in it there are some large trees and the grave of Cikoja V. The huts of the three women and the one man of N matrilineage are close together in the village but scarcely distinguishable from the huts of the main matrilineage. The huts of two women of Y matrilineage are set on the extremity of the village and are not yet separated from the huts of other lineages. Note how the huts of the villagers who have married their 'cross-cousins' are placed within the village as a whole. Huts 32 and 33 belonging to the two women of X lineage have been placed between the main block of the X matrilineage and the matrilineage of Jauma (Ma_1), who is married to one of these women. Huts 10 and 11, where members of the dominant matrilineage and the patrilaterally-linked lineage N have intermarried, are placed on the mutual fringe of these two groups. The three men of the patrilaterally-linked lineage X who are married into the dominant lineage form a little block in the north-western corner of the village. As soon as the patrilaterally-linked groups develop their identity and are able to express their autonomy, they tend to build in separate sections and to form corporate but component parts of the village.

613 582 One of the clearest ways in which the autonomy of the matrilineage is expressed is in the arrangements made about marriage sureties. In Cikoja's village, Cikoja himself is senior

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

613 621 622 The father and headman is almost forgotten in those villages which, though founded by him, do not contain any of his matrilineage. Sometimes men who have a number of adult children move away and found small villages of their own. I have struck a few villages of this type on the outskirts of White settlement areas at Namwera and near Zomba. The man has been a servant of the Whites as, say, an estate labourer. After ten or fifteen years on the estates he decides to stop working. Local men have probably married his daughters and he has made acquaintances with local people, while his attachment to his home village has become attenuated. Consequently, with his daughters he sets up his own homestead somewhere near the estate. He is probably both senior and junior marriage surety for his daughters' marriages, and also responsible for the welfare of his children and grandchildren. He reports serious illnesses and deaths to his wife's brother or her male uterine kinsmen, but otherwise he runs the internal affairs of his village as if he were the senior matrilineal kinsman. But as his sons grow up the sorority-group organization exerts itself, and soon his adult sons begin to take over the more arduous duties concerning the affairs of their sisters. They now walk to a sister's husband's home to tell of the husband's illnesses, or trudge for miles to find a diviner when one of the babies is ill. Their father still retains control over the village land and other important affairs concerning the village as a whole. At this stage in its history the hamlet will be known by his name. When he dies the control of the hamlet passes to his eldest son, and now it assumes once again the pattern of the ordinary Yao village. For a while it may retain the name of the father, but in due course it begins to be known by the name of the son. Gradually the father fades into the background and the son comes to the fore. Eventually, when the son dies, his sister's son assumes control over the village and inherits the name. Now there are probably some of the original headman's sons' children living in the village and forming the nucleus of a linked matrilineage. In spite of the foundation of the village as an extended family, the lineage principle soon begins to mould the village into the typical Yao pattern. It is clear from many of my genealogies in Malemia area that when villages first moved in they were made up of a man and wife and children. Now after, say, twenty years the 'extended family' pattern has com-

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

pletely disappeared and we have in its place a straightforward localized matrilineage as in Ali Kasunka village.

The Headman as the Link between the Dominant Lineage and the Patrilaterally-linked Groups

A headman's position when his own children or the children of his predecessor have started to operate as a corporate group in the village is clearly difficult. To the dominant matrilineage they are outsiders, and they are a source of tension in the more complex villages. This, in essence, is the situation about which the officiating headmen have almost certainly warned him at the installation ceremony, when they told him to beware of his wife's chatter, because it may bring about a split of the village. The headman occupies a position of jural authority over his matrilineal relatives. He has succeeded to the name of his mother's brother and is structurally the most senior matrilineal kinsman in the village. He is directly responsible in court and outside it for the behaviour and welfare of the matrilineage members. At the same time he is personally attached to his children by ties of intimacy and sentiment. Where there is a conflict between his own children and the matrilineage members he is placed in an invidious position. By legal right he should support his lineage members, by moral right he cannot spurn his children. What he tries to do as a rule is to browbeat his matrilineal relatives into submission to maintain the peace within the village. He runs the risk, however, of alienating the support of his sisters who may turn to his younger brothers and leave the village. This is what happened in Mponda's village, as I have outlined earlier.[1] Here, it will be recalled, a quarrel started between two young girls over a pounding mortar. It spread to the mothers of the girls, who were the headman's wife and his sister. The headman tried to browbeat his sister into submission, but she immediately turned to her younger brother. The result was that the headman lost his sisters to his younger brother.

The way in which the two opposed groups in the village crystallize out into opposed factions cannot be more clearly shown than in the sequence of events in Mpakata village, in January 1947.

Mpakata was the headman of the village, and he had three younger brothers, Walusa, Merison and Nanculuya. Ali Cibwana, Mpakata's

[1] See Chap. VI, p. 155.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

the significance of this formulation of his position is clear. It is when he shows partiality that the village under him is likely to break up. If he sides with his children his matrilineal kin are almost sure to move out; if he sides with his matrilineal kin, his children are likely either to return to their matrilineal village or, if they are adult, split off to set up a village of their own. The situation is precarious for the headman and it is very difficult for him to avoid a split in the village if he cannot keep the two opposed groups at peace.

My investigations show that few villages have contained patrilaterally-linked groups through the lives of two village headmen, unless these groups were descended from slaves. When the headman dies his successor assumes his name and social rôle. He also assumes the position of father towards the remaining children, who are in fact his cross-cousins. But his relationship towards them is not the same as that of father to children. The intimate link of the blood tie has been lost and the relationship becomes formalized. As more and more headmen succeed the genealogical link between the patrilaterally-linked groups and the dominant matrilineage becomes more and more remote, and the relationship becomes more and more casual. What usually happens is that shortly after the death of the headman and father, the patrilaterally-linked group takes exception to what the new headman does or says and moves off to found a village of its own. The case history I quoted earlier [1] brought this out clearly. The new headman had had intercourse with the wives of his 'son'. The son complained to the arbitrators in the dispute that 'he should have been as a father to me, and he is not'. The result was that the son refused compensation, and moved out of the village with his sisters to build on his own. When this happens the father–son relationship between the two villages is preserved and perpetuated, but the link is entirely formal and co-operation between them is limited to mutual attendance at funerals.

Patrilaterally-linked Groups as the Legacy of Slavery

Slave-groups in a village are usually linked patrilaterally to the dominant lineage. This is because the headman who was usually the captor of the slaves kept the women as concubines. They were given quasi-child status in the village, so that their children

[1] 'The Split of Cikumba Village', see Chap. V, p. 127.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

were called *yisikulu* (grandchildren) by the headman, who in turn was called *ambuje* (grandparent or master) by the slaves. The grandchild–grandparent relationship became fused with the master–slave relationship as the use of the term *ambuje* for master suggests. The slave descendants as a rule have no relatives in the neighbourhood. The Yao always redeemed uterine kin whom they found in slavery by replacing them with other slaves, usually taken or bought from the Nyanja, Ngoni or Bisa. Where there are slave-groups in a village to-day, they have frequently been bought or captured in distant places, so that their kinsmen have been unable to trace them. How much this

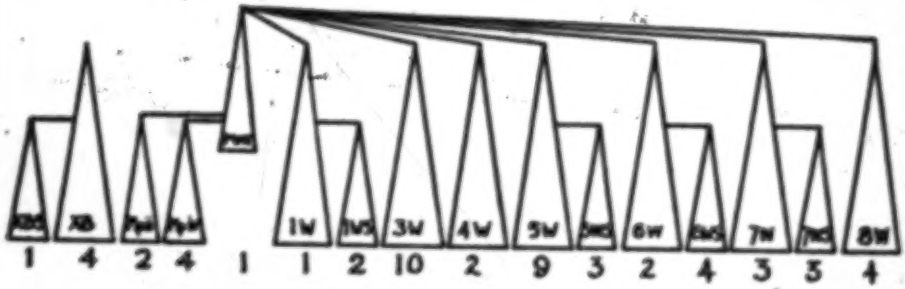

Diagram 5. The Ownership of Huts in Mpumbe Village.

has prevented slave-groups from leaving Yao villages I cannot say. Certainly before the White conquest members of a slave-group could only leave their captor's village at the risk of death. But after the White conquest it seems that many of the slave-groups left to set up their own villages. Many, on the other hand, no doubt for personal reasons, stayed with their captors in their villages, and are there to-day. In Cikoja's village, for example, there are six of these groups. Some are not very large, but only 20 of the 46 huts are owned by members of the dominant matrilineage who are not married to descendants of slaves. Eight are owned by members of the dominant matrilineage who have married slave descendants, and the remainder, 18 huts, are owned by members of the slave-groups who have married outsiders. This is a typical distribution of hut ownership. At one extreme is the pure matrilineal village such as Ali Kasunka's and at the other is the village in which the dominant lineage is barely represented. A village of this type was Mpumbe

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

when I visited it in 1947.[1] The basic structure of this village is set out in Diagram 5. Here the headman[2] was the last surviving member of the dominant matrilineage. The founder of the village, his mother's brother, had thirteen slave concubines. Some of these were barren but others produced children to give this complex structure. In this village the 55 huts were arranged in 16 different affiliations. The details are set out in Table XXIX. These groups were held together by Mpumbe IV, old, blind and doddering as he was. The virtual leader of the village was his elder brother's son, a man in his late forties or early fifties. When Mpumbe died, late in 1948, the people said that it was because of the sorcery of his brother's son who wished to take over the name of the village. This led to a dispute, which ended in the brother's son's leaving to found a new village about 15 miles away. A distant sister's son, as I have said, succeeded to the headmanship, and the reduced village was reunited under this new leader.

However, this is an extremely unusual type of village as most villages, if they are not simple matrilineal groups, have only one patrilaterally-linked group living with them. The reasons for this are firstly, that if patrilaterally-linked matrilineages develop at all in the modern villages, they move out very soon after the death of their progenitor, and, secondly, that there are very few of the old slave-raiders' villages left intact.

Cross-cousin and Other Kinds of Intra-village Marriages

A most important factor in the welding of patrilaterally-linked groups to the dominant matrilineage is marriage. The tradition of cross-cousin marriage is very strong among the Yao. A person may marry either type of cross-cousin but in practice preference is given to a father's sister's daughter—i.e. the woman is married to her mother's brother's son. There is a special term for cross-cousins, *asiwani*, which is used by either male or female talking to either sex. Between cross-cousins, especially cross-sexually, there is a joking-relationship which may vary all the way from ribald joking to sexual advances. Some of my male informants say that sexual intercourse may take place between cross-cousins

[1] See also Chap. VI, p. 161, and Chap. III, p. 59.

[2] He died late in 1948 and was succeeded by a distant 'sister's son' from the village of his perpetual son, Ngongondo.

[text continues on p. 199]

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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TABLE XXIX

OWNERSHIP OF HUTS IN MPUMBE VILLAGE

Affiliation of women:	*Affiliation of men:* Mat.	IW	IWS	3W	4W	5W	5WS	6W	6WS	7W	7WS	8W	Mpii	Mpiv	XB	XBS	Out.	Div.	Wid.	Total
Mat.	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
IW	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
IWS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	2
3W	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	4	–	1	7
4W	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
5W	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	–	2	8
5WS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	–	3
6W	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
6WS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	2
7W	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
7WS	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	4
8W	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	2
Mpii	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	4
Mpiv	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	1	5
XB	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	5
XBS	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Out.	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	1	2	3	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	10
Div.	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wid.	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	1	–	1	3	2	3	–	1	2	3	–	2	–	–	1	1	23	6	6	55

Notes. This table is on the same principle as Table XXVII. Here IW stands for the matrilineal descendants of Mpumbe I's first wife, 2WS for the matrilineal descendants of his second wife's son. Mpii stands for the matrilineal descendants of Mpumbe II's wife, and of course if she is alive she is included in the group. XB are the descendants of a classificatory brother of Mpumbe I. I am uncertain of his exact genealogical relationship to Mpumbe I. There are two huts not in this table. Hut 23 is occupied by Mpumbe II's late daughter's husband. Instead of moving back to his matrilineal village, this man has brought another woman into Mpumbe's. Hut 16 is occupied by the widow of Capola (Mpumbe I's ZS) and she has had no children.

In a village as complex as this the classification of the ownership of huts becomes arbitrary. Because of the amount of intermarriage between the component lineages most individuals can trace their descent from Mpumbe I by two or three lines. Here I have classified people into lineages by matrilineal descent as the first criterion. I have classified them into groups after that by one patrilateral link rather than by two, etc.

601 To Ego therefore, in a lineage linked through one patrilateral link:

605 Any person in the first ascending generation is 'father' or
613 'female father'.
Any person in the same generation is 'cross-cousin'.
Any person in the first descending generation is 'child'.

Those in the second ascending generation are called 'grandparent' and those in the second descending generation are called 'grandchildren'. By the merging of alternate generations, those in the second ascending and second descending generation may also be called 'cross-cousin'.

Where the subsidiary lineage is connected to the dominant lineage through two patrilateral links the kinship terms for siblings is applied to Ego's generation. In Diagram 7 the linked lineage marked A is connected to the dominant lineage through Ego's MMBS. Ego calls his mother's mother's brother's son 'father' and, therefore, calls his mother's mother's brother's sons' children by the appropriate sibling terms.

If a subsidiary lineage were connected through three patrilateral links the kinship nomenclature would be the same as if there were only one link. Lineages connected to dominant lineages through two or more patrilateral links are very rare. Most subsidiary lineages are connected through one patrilateral link only. In any village the generation differences between members of dominant and subsidiary lineages tend to be obscured. The Yao tend to see the component lineages as wholes, and therefore speak of the relationships between members of the dominant lineage and members of the subsidiary lineages in general as 'cross-cousinship' (*cisuwani*). It is only in special situations that the exact relationship becomes important.

605 The pattern of behaviour between cross-cousins is consistent
578 with this view of their rôles in the make-up of a village. In the
621 typical Yao village there are two or three groups who are united in their extra-village affairs but opposed in internal relationships. Their hostility to each other comes to the surface at the slightest provocation, but they are, nevertheless, co-villagers. They are kin and yet not kin, because the Yao look upon kinship as primarily matrilineal. They talk of the link through the father as 'not proper kinship'. The hostility between the members of the different cross-cousin groups in the village is dissipated

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

in a joking-relationship which is more intense between men and women. Men and women in Yao public life always behave distantly to each other; hence joking-relationships are most intense between male and female cross-cousins. The joking-relationships between cross-cousins of the same sex is much more subdued and limited. The village headman himself, if he is not the actual father of the cross-cousins, is likely to be the butt of most of this. His visits to the huts of his cross-cousins to give them irksome instructions is an especial occasion for this sort of joking. Cikoja ordered his female cross-cousins to sweep a site for my tent when I first went to his village. I was most embarrassed by the insults that were hurled at his head during this procedure, but he took it all calmly and said nothing. The hostility inherent in the headman–villager relationship, together with the opposition between the dominant matrilineage and the patrilaterally-linked groups, provided an opportunity *par excellence* for joking. Thus the joking between cross-cousins in the village context is a means whereby the hostility between the component groups is dissipated and the harmony within the village maintained.

The groups are, of course, welded more closely by cross-cousin marriages which are not only allowed but prescribed. By cross-cousin marriage a man from one of the component groups of the village may marry and yet not leave the village. He may in fact have to build a hut in another part of the village, but this is obviously not the separation that uxorilocal marriage entails. At the same time, in a village where the headmen have married their cross-cousins, there will be fewer patrilaterally-linked groups, so that the village will be less complex and consequently less liable to internal dissension. If cross-cousin marriages were not practised, and if the children of the headmen and senior members of the linked lineages did not return to their matrilineal villages on the death of one of their parents, the intra-village situation could in time become extremely complex. Assuming that each linked group had at least one male member married virilocally, the number of related groups would double itself in each generation.[1] However, because of limiting economic factors I describe later and the disruptive social processes within villages, this situation never occurs in practice, and Yao villages on the whole remain relatively simple in structure.

[1] See detailed argument and diagram in *Seven Tribes*, 333.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

Other Types of Village Structure

621 571 Linked groups in most villages are connected by patrilateral ties, but other kinsmen, or even unrelated persons, are also found in villages. I have been describing essentially the organization of groups. Some kinsmen do in fact come to live in villages because of personal links to the headman or some other villager. If a man or woman does this, he or she usually has a single hut which is placed close to his or her kinsman. If the person lives in the village long enough a related group may grow up around him or her, and when the children reach adulthood this group will become internally organized and corporate in its dealings with the other groups in the village. But this seldom happens, because the ties to the resident kinsman are usually too weak to hold the children, or the causes which drove the founder of the new group out of his or her original village have disappeared. Children may leave a village with their mother because she was accused of being a sorceress, and go to live in the village where her brother is married. When she dies, or the incident is forgotten, they may go back to their matrilineal village. For example, Bt. Mkwinda of Cikoja village ran away with her husband after her child was supposed to have been bewitched by her mother. But her children, as they grew up, came back to marry in the village of origin, or at least to contract marriages near it. In Chiwalo's, Nyambi's and Kawinga's areas, where I have recorded most genealogies of villages, I found few people who were neither matrilineal- nor patrilaterally-linked relatives. In Malemia area, which is nearer Zomba, the situation was somewhat different. The dominant matrilineage- and patrilaterally-linked groups of the typical Yao village were still quite easily discernible. But there were other related and unrelated groups and huts in the villages. An example of this is Citenjele village,[1] on the north boundary of Malemia's area. There the main village contained the following huts:

621 571 361

Dominant matrilineage	22
Groups linked through present headman	5
Hut linked through present headman's brother	1
Groups linked through previous headman	5
Groups linked through previous headman's brother	4
	37 huts

[1] See also 'An Outline of the Social Structure of Malemia Area', 36–40.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

About 250 yards to the north-west is a single hut belonging to the sister of the husband of one of the present headman's daughters. In the middle of the group on the road is a single hut of a woman who has no connections in the village at all. Her husband works in a mission garden about a mile away. About 100 yards from the north-east edge of the main block is a group of 4 huts which are unrelated to Citenjele, but which had joined him about 25 years ago before he had moved into Malemia area. About 250 yards farther to the north-east there are 2 huts owned by the daughters of the sister of the wife of a man who had married one of the female members of the dominant matrilineage. Due east about half a mile away, there is a group of 6 huts which are owned by Yao. These are unrelated groups and are under Citenjele as Administrative Village Headman, but they are for all intents and purposes separate villages.

There are other types of villages. For example, in Namwera area I found a village composed of a number of unrelated sections. The huts of each could quite easily be distinguished from those of other sections though they were built very close to each other in some parts of the village. Each section was built up on exactly the same pattern as other Yao villages—that is, there was a dominant matrilineage and sometimes some patrilaterally-linked huts. Each section had its own leader who concerned himself with its internal affairs. He, nevertheless, recognized the authority in general of a village headman, who lived in one of the sections of the village. He was the Administrative Headman for the village and he was the first to come into the area. All the other sections had had to ask him for land when they had moved into the area. His authority was confined to his duties as Administrative Headman though he was much respected and the sections called h[illegible]in regularly as an arbitrator in their affairs. But if the chief called all village headmen to the court, the leaders of the various sections went as well, so that he was not in fact their representative to outside authority in all situations. The relationships between the various sections, therefore, were very much like those between village headmen in Kawinga's area. The only difference seemed to be the amount of physical concentration of the huts.

I tried to find out why these sections lived so close to one another. My informants told me that there were many men away at labour centres and it was necessary to build the huts

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

close together so that the few men left in the village could protect the village against man-eating lions. This is certainly an area where man-eating lions are common and kill people every year. It is true also that man-eating lions have ceased their depredations in Kawinga and Nyambi areas. But I also found a similar type of village in Malemia area.[1] Here the explanation was that the villages had been made to live together by the Administration under the 1912 Ordinance. But the Ordinance was applied to the whole district, yet there are not many of these villages.

The relationships between the section leaders and the village headman are exactly the same as those between independent headmen farther south. The difference in the villages is the degree of physical concentration of the huts; which brings up for review the concept of 'the village'. I have defined the village as a discrete cluster of huts occupied by a group of kinsmen[2] and hinted that the huts were not always clearly separated from neighbouring huts. In fact the Yao word for village, *musi*, may be applied to social groups of different orders. I have already mentioned that different sections of a village may be scattered in discrete groups. The term *kamusi* (diminutive) or even *musi* may be applied to any of these clusters of huts in a situation where the larger kinship section is not involved. A man may tell his friend that he has bought some maize at Meni's village. He means that he bought the maize at the group of huts under Meni in Majaja village. In a court case, however, he would say that he had married a woman in Majaja village even though he were referring to the daughter of Meni.

The expanded village—i.e. the groups of kinsmen who recognize the leadership of one man, but whose huts are relatively distantly spaced in discrete clusters—may give a stamp to the social organization in a small area of, say, a square mile or two. The dominant matrilineage of the senior headman and his patrilaterally-linked groups may all live in this area in physically separate groups, but their kinship is still dominant and they are for ritual purposes still 'of one fire'. In time any of these groups may move off and be replaced by complete strangers. The senior headman still retains his position of authority over the

[1] Ngalango village. It is described in 'An Outline of the Social Structure of Malemia Area', 35-6.

[2] Chap. I, p. 3, and Chap. V, p. 110 f.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

strangers. Meantime, the seceding group moves into some other village area at a distant place, where they are strangers themselves. The result is that kinship soon ceases to be the organizing principle in local areas, and the principle of primacy takes its place. Hence, primary[1] kinship provides the principle on which the relationships among village headmen, and therefore villages, may be organized in a local area, for only a relatively short time. Before long, for a variety of reasons, the smaller villages move away and their sites are taken by others.

Primary matrilineal kinship on the other hand retains its significance as the means whereby relationships are organized within villages. In other words, outside the lineages of the ruling families it is very difficult to record a genealogy which does more than link the component parts of a village. Beyond this genealogies are socially insignificant. Therefore, since villages are continually breaking up, genealogies are usually shallow. Once a group has broken away to found a new village, its exact genealogical link with the parent village tends to be forgotten and replaced by a formalized link of perpetual kinship between the two village headmen.

Yao society, therefore, is not 'organic' in the way that Fortes describes Tallensi society: it is not 'governed by the same principles at all levels and in every sector of the social structure'.[2] Instead different principles of organization apply at different levels of Yao society. Thus the shallow lineages that form the cores of villages are internally segmented. Villages are composed of matrilineages linked to each other usually through patrilateral ties, ties which are initially primary but become perpetual. Chiefdoms, on the other hand, may be seen as organizations of villages ranked in relation to each other and to the chief in terms of their perpetual kinship links, their antecedents, and their strength of following.

The same groups of matrilineal kinsmen may interact in three different fields of social relationships. Firstly, they may form a segment within a matrilineage. Secondly, they may form a group in a village linked initially by a primary and later by a perpetual patrilateral tie to the headman. Thirdly, if they

[1] I.e. kinship that can actually be traced as against 'putative' or 'perpetual' kinship.

[2] Fortes, *The Web of Kinship*, 341.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

should break away to found a new village they may become a Newcomer and relatively junior hamlet in political relationships with other villages in a local area of a chiefdom.

The group of kinsmen in each situation exhibits different degrees of corporate identity. As part of a lineage the identity of the group, except in unusual circumstances, is merged in the identity of the lineage. As part of a village the identity of the group appears clearly enough in intra-village affairs, but is merged in the identity of the village otherwise. It is only when the group can set up as a village of its own that its identity is finally established, that is, when the group becomes fully autonomous.

The identity of a group of matrilineal kinsmen therefore varies with the extent to which matrilineal ties with other kinsmen are attenuated. They can emphasize their independence of their kinsmen by playing down the link between them. A linked lineage in a village emphasizes its *patrilateral* link with the dominant lineage and so maintains its identity within its village of residence. The members do not consider themselves a part of a matrilineage which is dominant in some other village. By the same process a newly-founded hamlet does not emphasize its detailed and intimate links with its parent village, but tends to subsume these into a formal, perpetual relationship between the respective village headmen.

In Yao society, therefore, we may distinguish three orders or levels of social grouping:

1. The matrilineage which consists of ranked lineage segments.
2. The village which consists of ranked matrilineages.
3. The chiefdom which consists of ranked villages.

It is only at the most fundamental of these levels, i.e. within the matrilineage, that matrilineal descent provides a principle for organizing group relations. At the next level, i.e. within the village, matrilineal kinship gives way to other types of primary kinship between key personalities in the structure. At the third level, i.e. within the chiefdom, kinship appears only in the form of the highly formalized 'perpetual' kinship—the actual links may well have been forgotten long ago. The same kinship term may be applied between personalities at all three levels of organization, but the content of the term changes according to the field of interaction.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

CHAPTER VIII

THE VILLAGE THROUGH TIME

IN order to present my analysis of the internal structure of Yao villages and of the position of the village in the social structure as a whole, I have given static pictures of villages at particular moments of time. But it should be clear that this description of the enduring social relationships, which appear as a static social structure, is abstracted from a series of on-going processes in which certain social relationships appear as repetitive elements.

In reality villages are constantly changing. Their personnel is replaced, their internal lineage composition changes, and they change their sites from chiefdom to chiefdom. It is perhaps easiest to visualise these changes, and the way they affect the structure, by viewing them in terms of the slow ontogenetic development of villages. Villages pass through a cycle which leads from their inception, through internal differentiation out of a larger group, to final break-up through their own differentiation, and the resumption of their original simple form.

Let us consider the typical life history of a hamlet which has just moved into a particular area. It is composed of four or five huts belonging to the daughters of one woman. The mother herself may be alive, as an old woman and very probably a widow. The daughters are adults and have with them their husbands and children. The hamlet settles down to its life in its new area. The warden of this sorority-group probably lives some miles away and the women have to send the older children to call him when they need his help. As the daughters of the [341] women grow up, young men come to marry them. Each couple may start to live in the girl's mother's kitchen at the back of the hut. In time the husband builds a hut next door to the [342] hut of his mother-in-law. Yao huts as a rule are made from pole and daub and they last from five to ten years. White ants eat the poles away and the thatch always leaks a little in very wet weather. The winds and the rains erode away the plaster.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

When a villager died in pre-White days, the hut and personal effects were destroyed. Nowadays, with the improving type of dwelling, which frequently includes well-timbered doors and glass-windows, huts are treated with medicine to cleanse them of the harmful effects of the death and they are used again. But all houses must be repaired continually if they are to remain habitable. Eventually most houses fall beyond repair and new houses must be built. The women pull the poles out of the ground and use them for firewood and the site is planted with pumpkins or maize by the nearest relative.[1] A new hut site is then chosen according to the wishes of the owners. As a rule outsiders are neutral about this, and a village member selects a site in accordance with his or her social position in the village. The women still stay near their mother, but they may build on the outside fringe of a group of huts. When the mother's house collapses she may in turn build her hut on the outside fringe of the group near her daughter's hut. In this way the spatial distribution of the huts gradually comes to reflect the segmentation of the lineage.

As the woman's daughter's children grow up and marry, the woman's son persuades his wife's relatives to allow him to take his wife to live in his home village. If he is a polygynist he usually takes the senior wife, but he may take the other or others as well. His own daughters now marry uxorilocally in the village if their mother is still alive. If the parents live long enough their daughter's daughters in turn marry and build their huts there. A crisis comes when either the man or his wife dies. The children have to decide whether to stay where they are or to move back to their own matrilineal village. If they do stay at their father's village they form the nucleus of a patrilaterally-linked group. As they grow older the senior male of their matrilineage may come to live with them. Through the years while this internal differentiation is developing within the village, the huts are decaying and being rebuilt. While new hut sites are being selected the physical form of the village is reflecting the continuing social differentiation.

At the same time gardens are being planted and crops reaped each year. The soil in the first garden sites has probably been depleted already and is either lying fallow or is under cassava.

[1] Usually the name-heir of a woman, i.e. her daughter's daughter.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

As garden land becomes scarcer, members of the village have probably approached patrilateral or affinal kinsmen in other villages for personal grants of land. The lands immediately surrounding the village have long since become depleted and crops will only thrive on lands some miles away; then the village moves its site. How long it will be before this becomes necessary, depends on the fertility of the soil. Most villages must move eventually. When they do they may move a few hundred yards only, or on the other hand, they may select a site thirty to forty miles away. Whether the site is far or near, the migration is not a mass movement of the village as I have so far assumed for the purposes of analysis. As a rule a few villagers, including the headman, move first. The headman may be there a year or more before the second lot of villagers move. They usually move in sorority-groups so that when they build at the new site they place their huts in sections. Thus, the internal social organization of the village is reflected in the same way as before. The whole move may take three or four years before it is completed.

This process of development of the village and its gradual and continual reformation is sometimes hastened by the conflicts that appear within it. I have from time to time mentioned various conflicts that have led to the split of a village and the subsequent migration of one of its sections. The new section sets up a small hamlet in a distant locality, especially if the reason for its secession was sorcery. Here the general process of evolution is started anew. Its parent village, however, is strengthened by the migration since the dissident elements have left it. It continues to carry on its existence and to throw off other villages from time to time.

The number of villages, in the area I studied, is increasing with the increase of population, but the average size of each village remains constant and appears to have done so for many years.[1] But at the same time some villages as entities are disappearing while new ones are being formed. A few new villages become resorbed by their parent villages when for some reason they cannot continue their separate existence. Other villages fragment and do not split. The individual village members leave the village and go their separate ways. Very frequently when

[1] See the argument in Chap. II, p. 40.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

this happens the husbands take their wives to their several villages with them.

Throughout this general process the links between groups of any particular area are constantly changing but the general pattern remains constant. A village expands outwards, and the various patrilineally-linked groups, and often some of the segments of the dominant lineage, form hamlets separate from each other. The dominance of one of the local headmen over the others is still recognized and the general pattern of primacy is maintained. Some of the earliest villages in the area remain intact through many years. Villages which were small hamlets twenty or thirty years ago, when they had just moved into the area, have become relatively senior. Many headmen who were senior then have moved, or their villages have disintegrated, or ceased to exist. Other villages have moved in and are ranked lower. Thus through time the rank of any one headman may have changed, but the ranking system and the relationships of senior to junior headmen remain unaltered.

The general process is the same for the whole chiefdom, though there is less overall structural change than in smaller areas. The more important a village headman, the less likely is his village to disappear entirely. The most important village headmen, therefore, have long histories of association with the chief. Thus while there is considerable change going on at the lowest levels of the social system, the social structure of the whole chiefdom is remarkably stable. In other words, the rate of change taking place within the structure varies directly with the level of organization within that structure. The names of the *ndona* of Kowinga, Liwonde and Malemia are the same as those of the *ndona* who accompanied these chiefs into Nyasaland in the middle of the nineteenth century. Relatively few of them have disappeared. And so it is with important village headmen. The links between them, fixed by their rank and status relative to each other in perpetual kinship and other ties, form the political structure of the chiefdom. From chiefdom to chiefdom the same pattern of organization is concealed behind an apparent diversity of actual links.

But, as a result of their contact with other peoples and their absorption into the economic and administrative framework of the British Empire, new social relationships are developing

APPENDIX B

GENEALOGY, HUT COUNT AND VILLAGE PLAN: ALI KASUNKA VILLAGE

Hut numbers in brackets after the names in the genealogy.
Other symbols: d = dead; mar = married out; Im = labour migrant; s = below age of puberty; k = kitchen.

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Hut Ownership

Hut No.	Owner	Gen. Ref.
1	Bt. Kasunka	C5
2	Bt. Nkumala	D19
3	Bt. Nkuwa	D1
4	Alanje	D12
5	Bt. Lale	D15
6	Mwanaca	D10
7	Ali Kasunka	C6
8	Mlalanyau	C1
9	Anawila	C7

Village Plan: Ali Kasunka
(Not to Scale)

APPENDIX C

SKELETON GENEALOGY, HUT COUNT AND VILLAGE PLAN: MENI SECTION OF MAJAJA VILLAGE

Only hut owners are shown in the genealogy.

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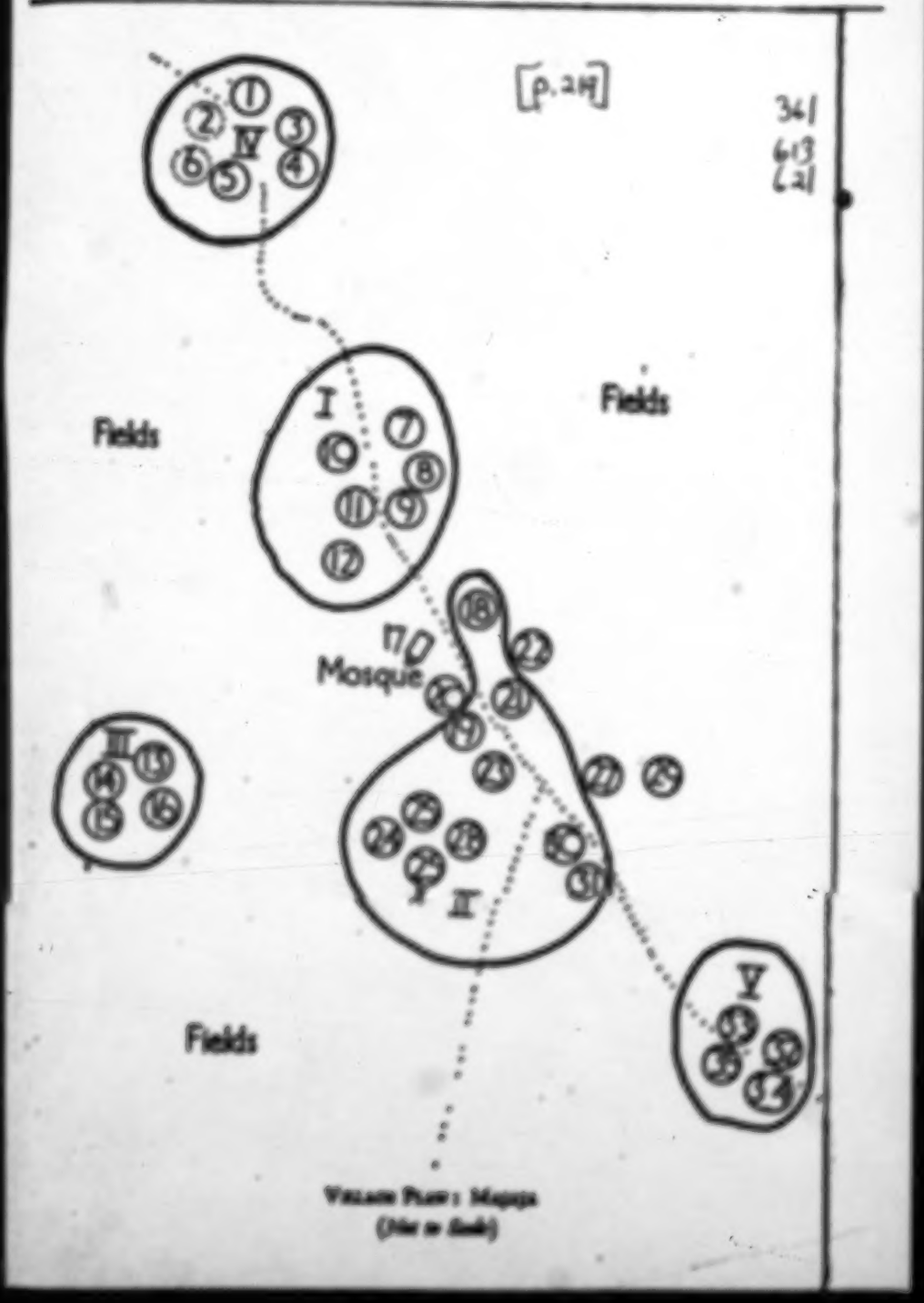
Hut County

Hut No.	Owner	Gen. Ref.	Hut No.	Owner	Gen. Ref.
1	Meni	B4	19	Bt. Taimo	D6
2	Empty		20	Kitchen to hut 18	
3	Ambiyanje	C8	21	Bt. Woti	D7
4	Girls' dormitory		22	Ngwalaka	nil
5	Sayisi	D11	23	Bt. Tayali	D5
6	Dimoni		24	Bt. Saidi	D9
7	Bt. Nyili	D1	25	Bt. Saidi	D10
8	Bt. Mlangoni	D3	26	Bt. Gwenambe	C4
9	Bt. Dowa	E1	27	Ali Asini	D4
10	Bt. Wemba	D2	28	Boys' dormitory	
11	Ariwanjila	C1	29	Bt. Cinongo	C3
12	Binya	B1	30	Bt. Juma	nil
13	Esimi	C6	31	Asanyongo	B2
14	Bt. Mlenje	C5	32	Polinjeje	D8
15	Amina	B3	33	Bt. Mainja	B5
16	Bt. Cibwana	C7	34	Ambalaje	C12
17	Mwapa		35	Elbi	C11
18	Cibwi	C2	36	Lusi	C10

The following huts are not included in the genealogy:

Hut 2—Empty.
Hut 4—Girls' dormitory.
Hut 9—Dimoni.
Hut 17—Mwapa.
Hut 20—Kitchen to Hut 18.
Hut 22—Ngwalaka, a non-relative.
Hut 27—Boys' dormitory.
Hut 29—Bt. Juma, a relative of Ngwalaka.

2: Mitchell E-3 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7



APPENDIX D

GENEALOGY AND HUT COUNT: CIKOJA VILLAGE

Hut Count

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Hut No.	Wife's name	Gen. Ref.	Name of husband	Gen. Ref.
1	Amasuda	D14	Mbwana	C11
2	Ayusi	E8	Kasoli	D33
3	(Boys' dormitory)			
4	Bt. Tepusi	F37	Mapila	E32
5	Bt. Boula	E19	(outsider)	
6	Aniya	D15	(outsider)	
7	Bt. Anuunu	E14	(outsider)	
8	Alusi	D16	Ali Mkwinda	C13
9	Lunjela	E13	(outsider)	
10	Ajumo	E25	Musa	D7
11	Bt. Mwamadi	G10	Nkazwila	D20
12	Bt. Bwana Isa	F16	(outsider)	
13	Bt. Amisa	E4	(outsider)	
14	Asubiya	E9	(outsider)	
15	Abena	E30	Rajabu	F20
16	Bt. Selemani	D19	(outsider)	
17	Narweta	E60	Salimu ii	D3
18	Bt. Kacenga	D40	(outsider)	
19	(outsider)		Ali Tepusi	E40
20	Alima	D22	(outsider)	
21	Aliya	D23	(divorced)	
22	Kalingule	E38	(outsider)	
23	Akumbiripe	E31	(outsider)	
24	Bt. Ciwina	E33	(outsider)	
25	Bt. Mwenye	C14	(outsider)	
26	Bt. Mwanjale	E55	(outsider)	
27	Alusi	E57	(outsider)	
28	Bt. Cisinga	E59	(outsider)	
29	Asidaya	E56	(outsider)	
30	Tuwemeje	E54	(outsider)	
31	Bt. Ulanga	D34	(outsider)	
32	Bt. Likomba	E53	Juuma	F7
33	Bt. Cikwenga	F64	(outsider)	
34	(outsider)		Cilimba	F1
35	Bt. Madi	F10	(outsider)	
36	Bt. Aliya	F11	(outsider)	

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

Hut Count—*continued*

Hut No.	Wife's name	Gen. Ref.	Name of husband	Gen. Ref.
37	Bt. Ntalika	E3	(outsider)	
38	Bt. Kima	G1	(outsider)	
39	Atawile	E50	(outsider)	
40	Bt. Mapeseva	D32	(outsider)	
41	(outsider)		Kasui	F3
42	Mege	F28	(outsider)	
43	Bt. Mbwana	F2	(outsider)	
44	Ayuyuje	F29	(outsider)	
45	Kasingati	F30	(outsider)	
46	Asimwene	E6	(outsider)	
47	(outsider)		Cikoja VI	E7

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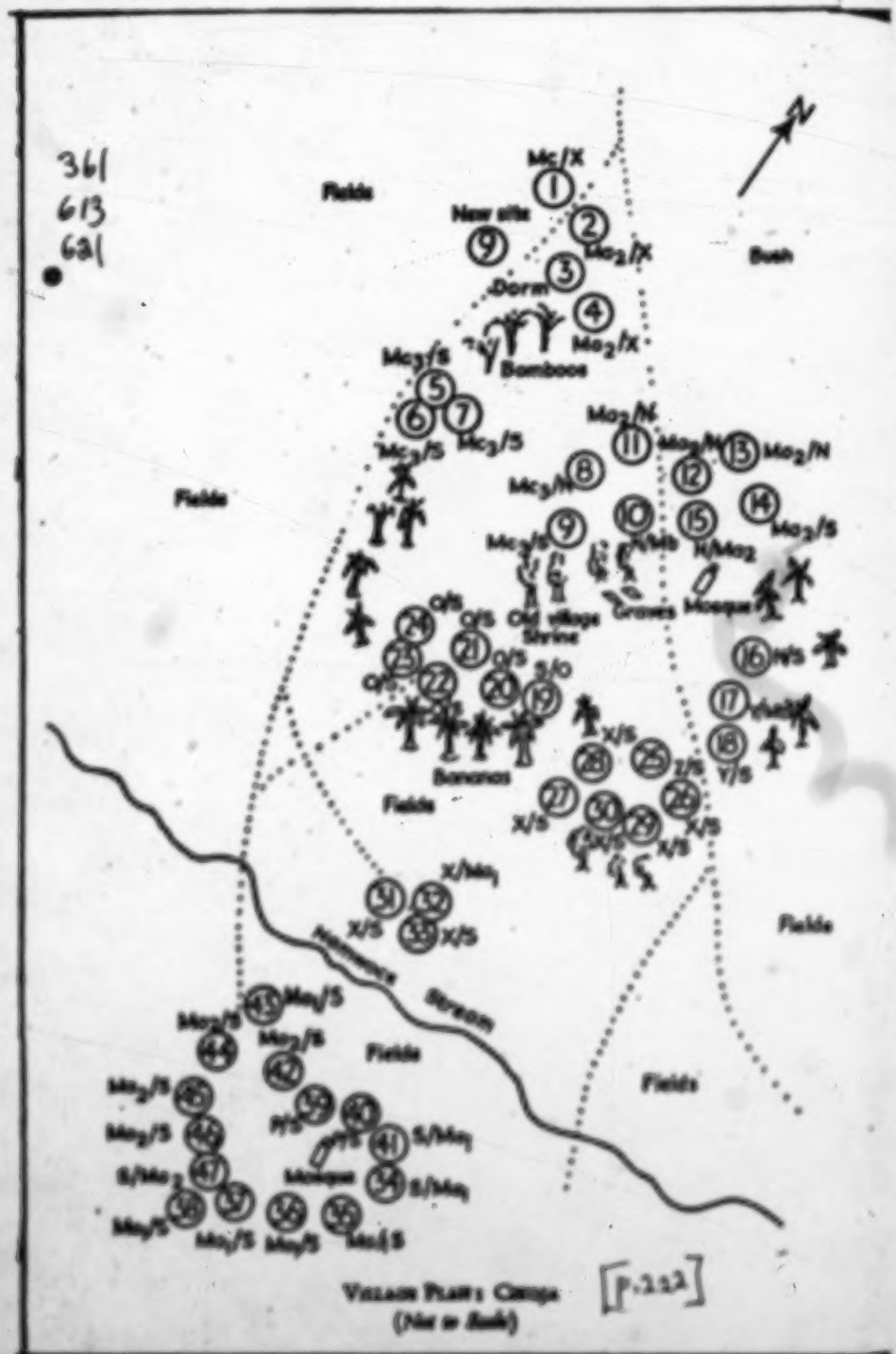
Note: The genealogies for Appendices B, C and D have been inserted as folding plates at the end of the book.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Fields
New site
Dorm
Bamboos
Bush
Fields
Old village
Shrine
Graves
Mosque
Bananas
Fields
Fields
Fields
Stream
Fields
Village Plan: Ciwaya
(Not to Scale)
[P.222]

KEY TO CIKOJA VILLAGE PLAN

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Ma = Senior segment of dominant matrilineage, i.e. descendants of Ncilaga (C5).

Mb = Second segment of dominant matrilineage, i.e. descendants of Bt. Mkwinda (C6).

Mc = Third segment of dominant matrilineage, i.e. descendants of Lunjela (C8).

Ma_1 = Descendants of Atabiya (D1).

Ma_2 = Descendants of Amaliana (D2).

Mc_3 = Descendants of Amaenda (D14).

Mc_4 = Descendants of Aniya (D15).

Mc_5 = Descendants of Alusi (D16).

N, O, P, X, Y, Z = Patrilineally-linked lineages.

S = Outsiders.

Mc_3/B = A female descendant of Amaenda married to a man from B patrilineally-linked lineage.

[p.223]

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

Generation—A B C

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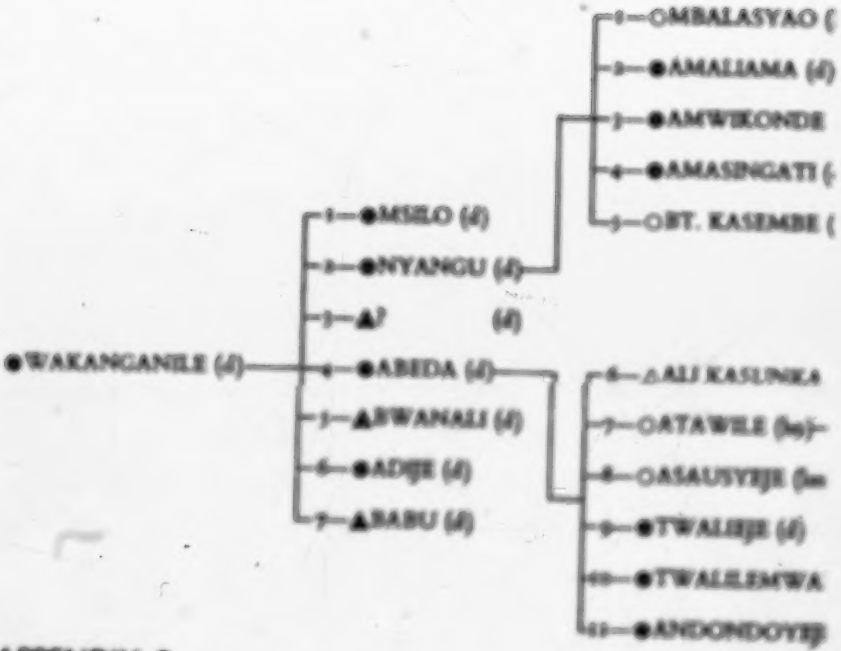

APPENDIX B

[End chart 10]

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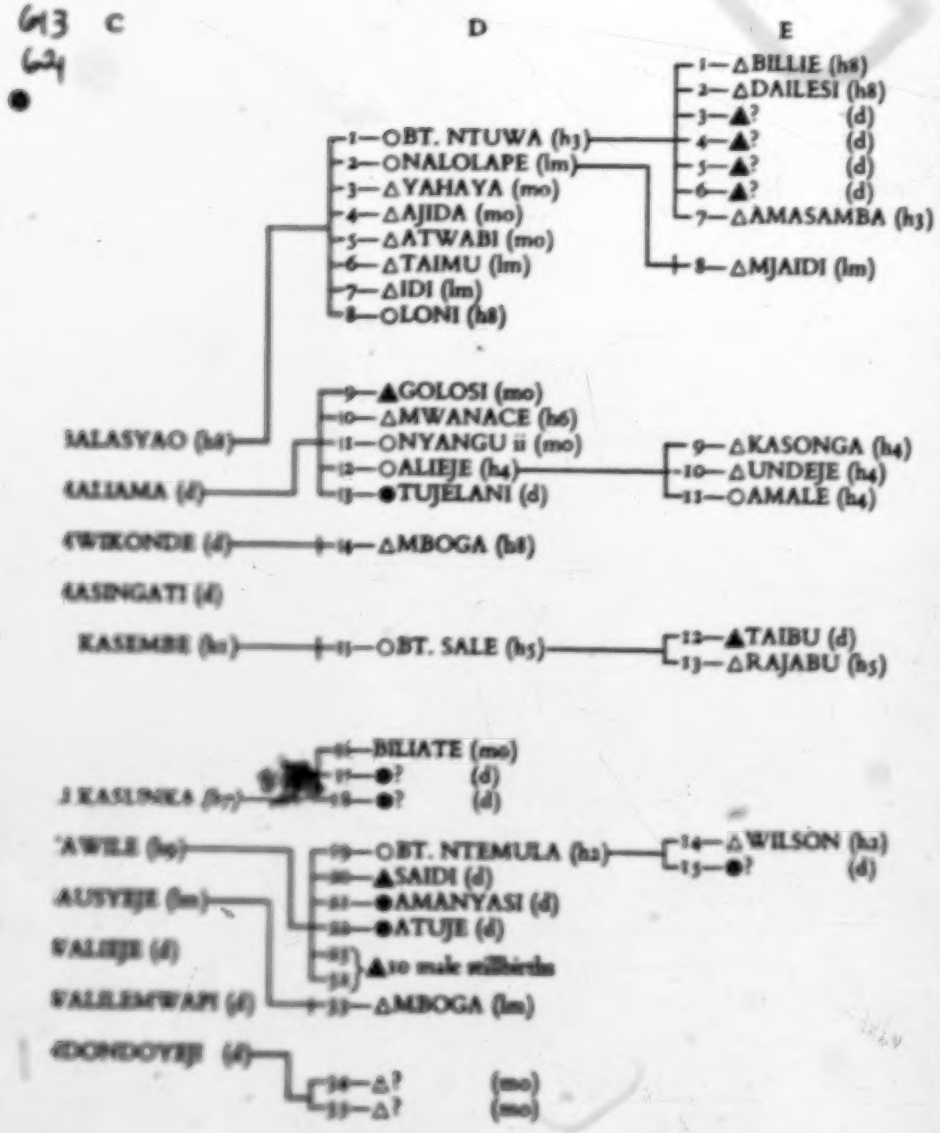

[End Chart 16]

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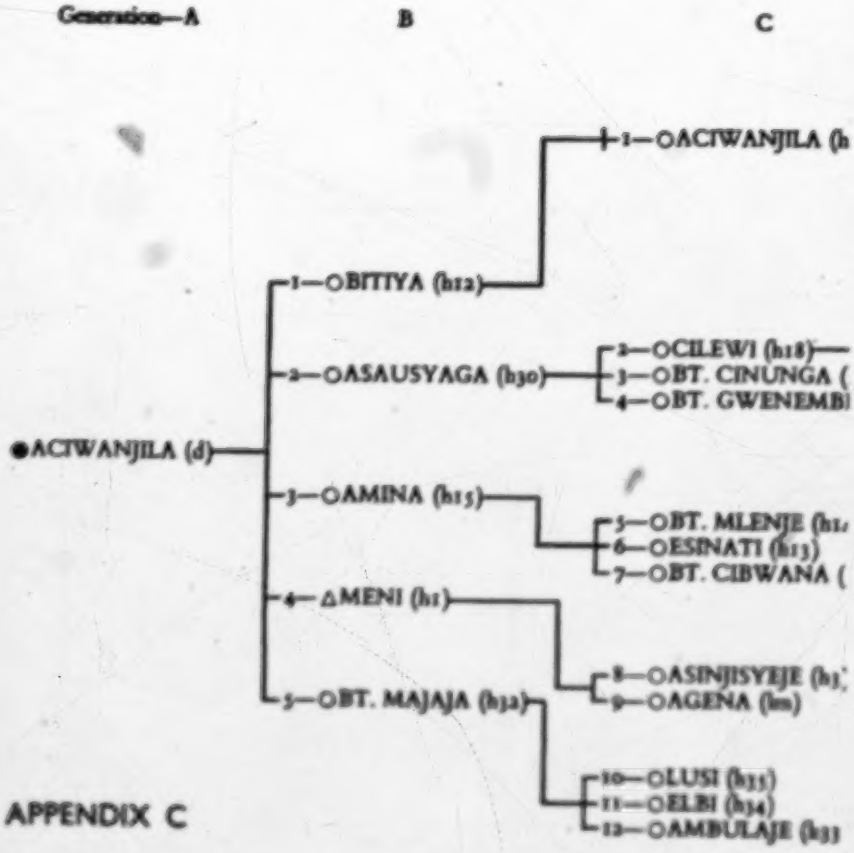

APPENDIX C

[End chart 2a]

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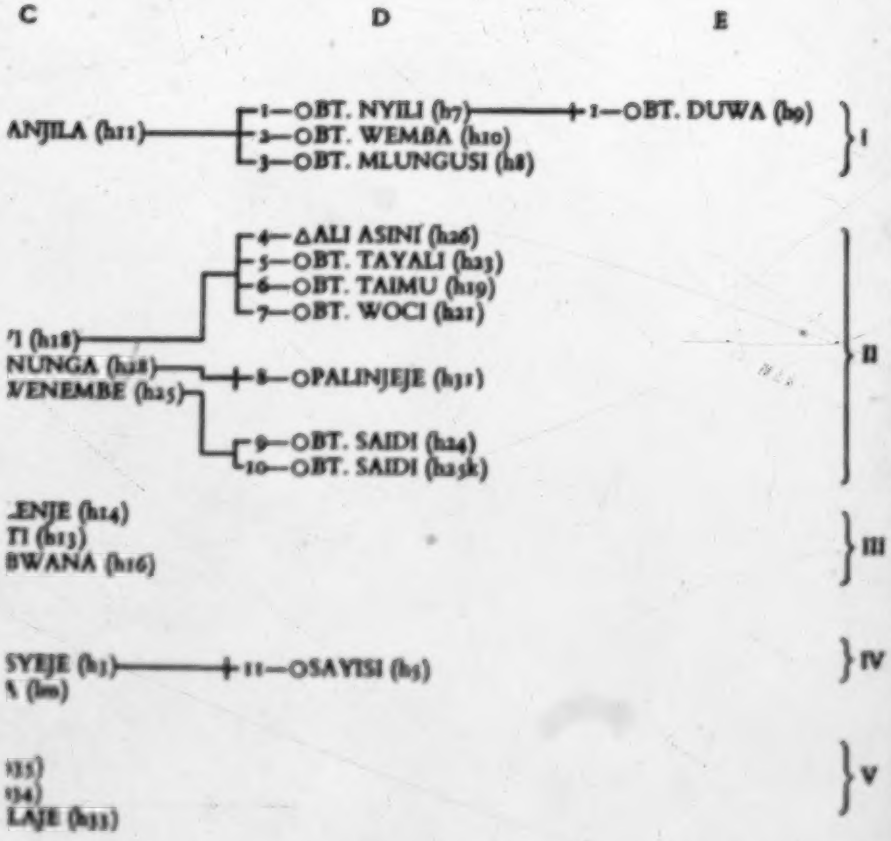
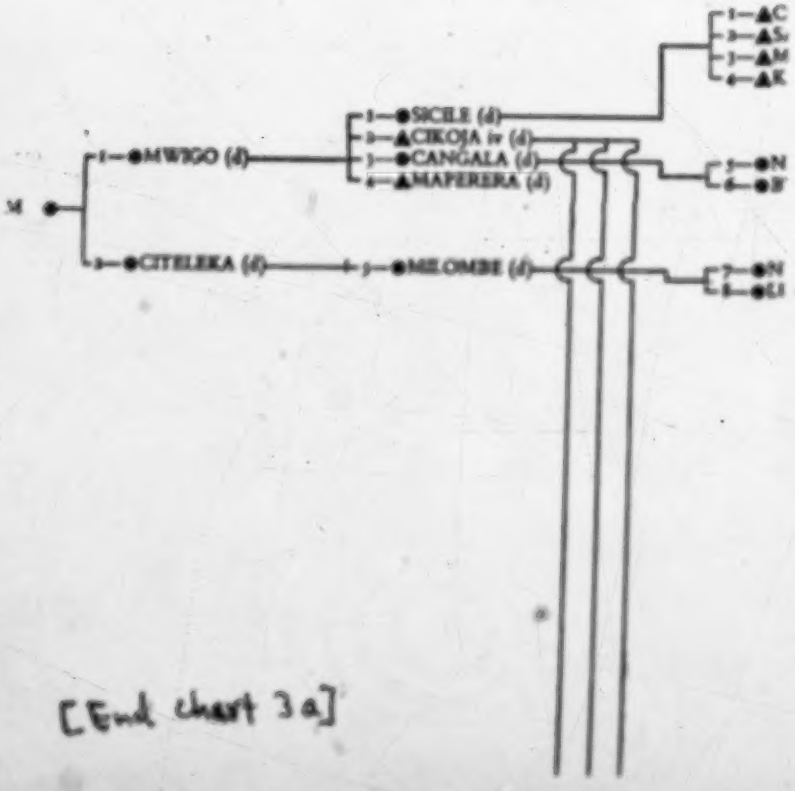


[End chart 2b]

Generation A B

361
613
624 APPENDIX D



[End chart 3a]

C D

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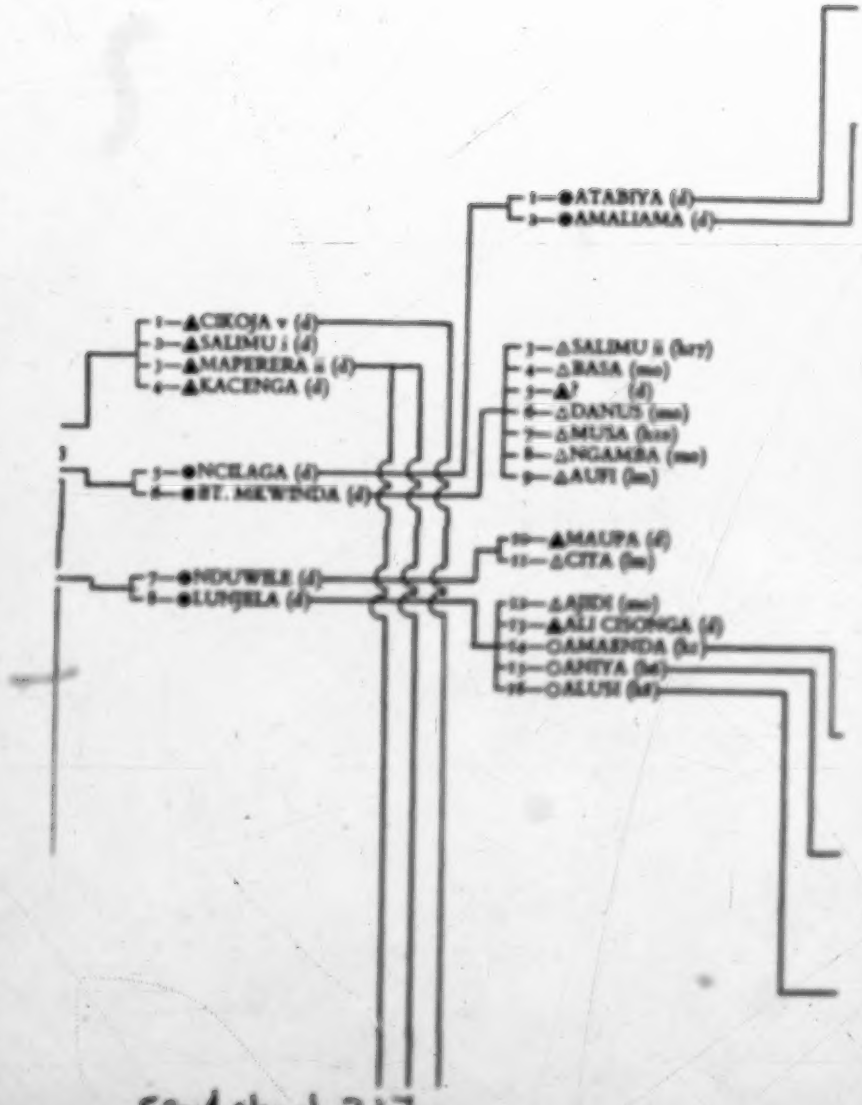

E F

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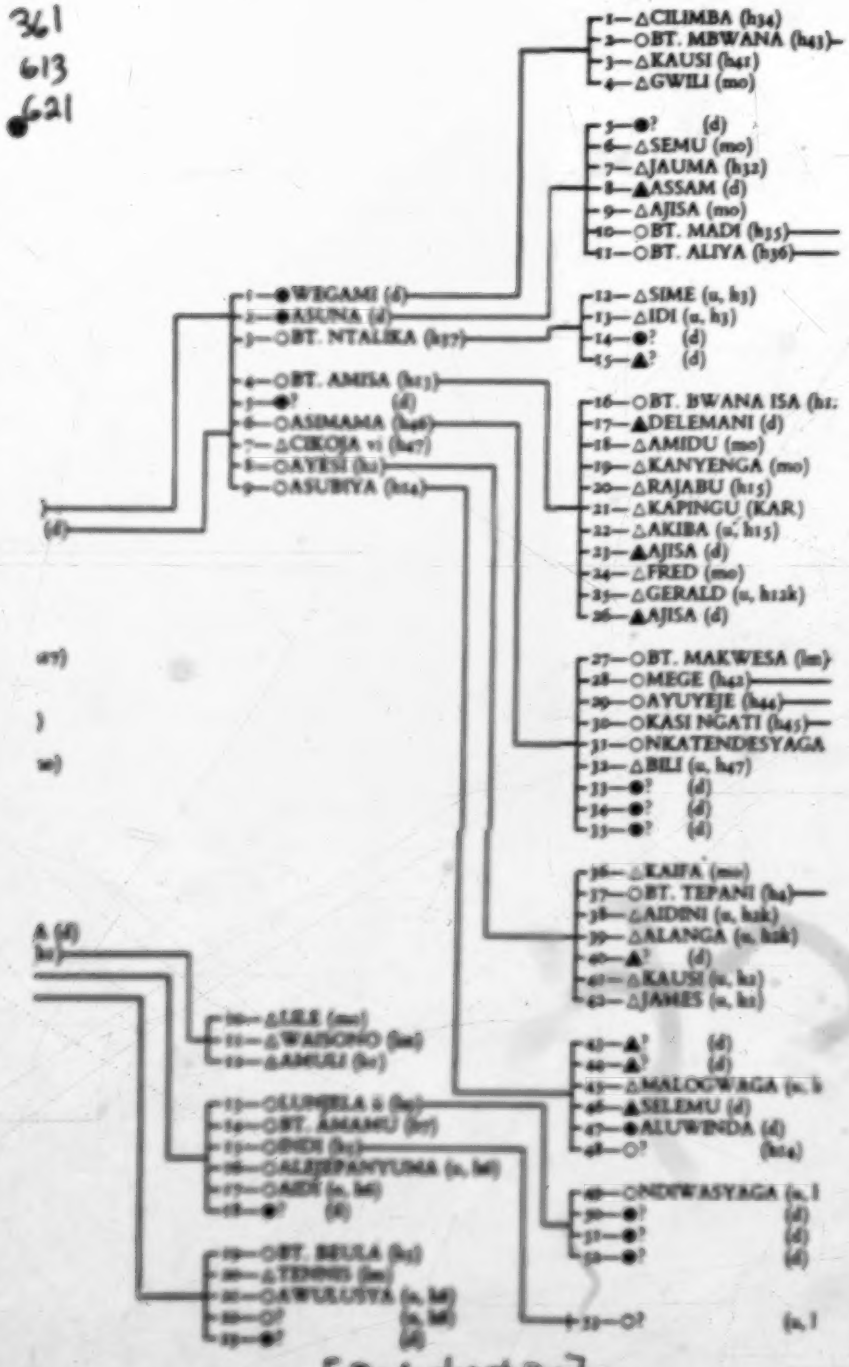
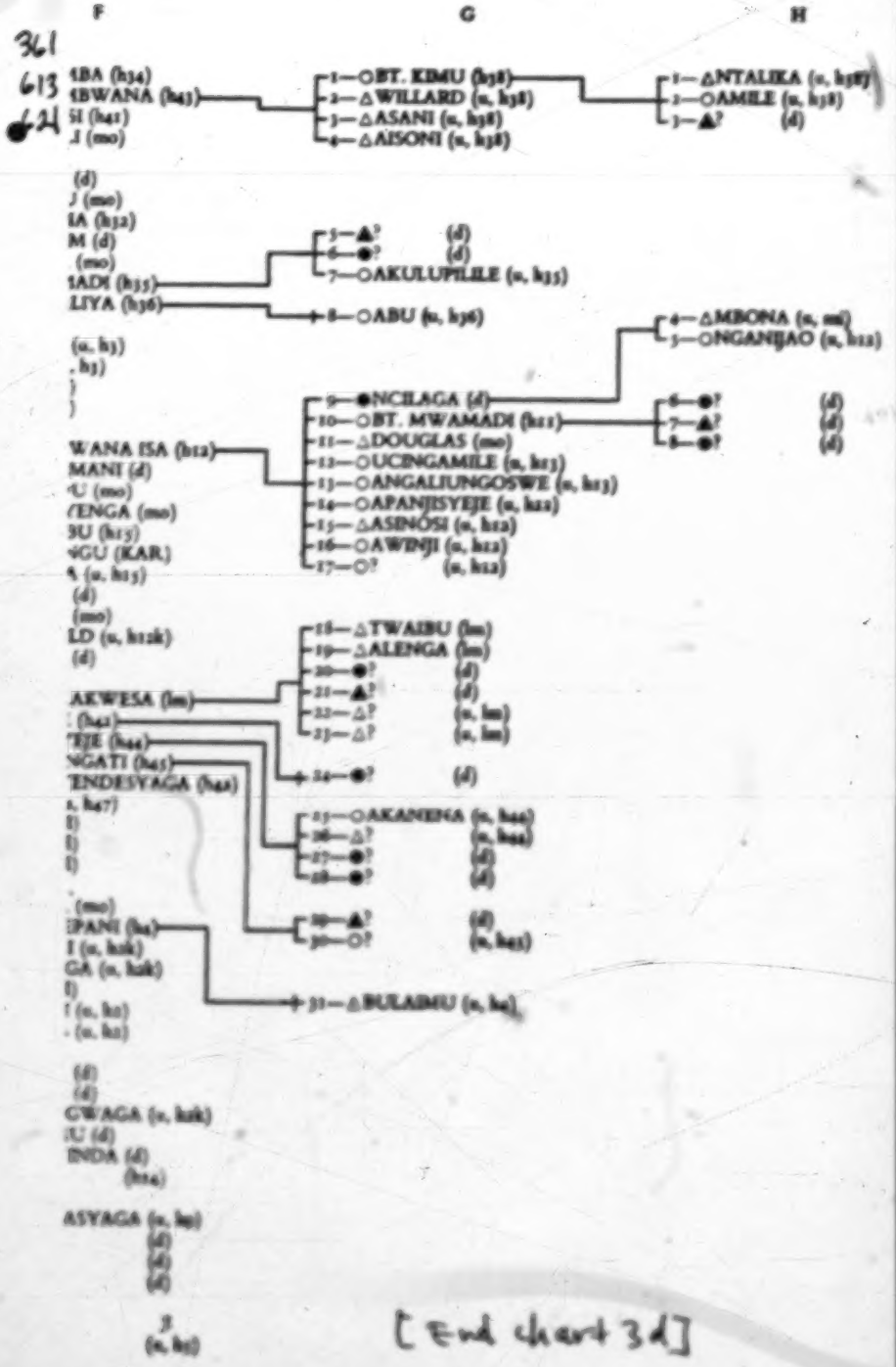


[Bad chart 7c]


F
G
H
1—○BT. KIMU (h38)
2—△WILLARD (u, h38)
3—△ASANI (u, h38)
4—△AISONI (u, h38)
1—△NTALIKA (u, h38)
2—○AMILE (u, h38)
3—▲? (d)
5—▲? (d)
6—●? (d)
7—○AKULUPILILE (u, h35)
8—○ABU (u, h36)
4—△MBONA (u, mi)
5—○NGANJAO (u, h22)
9—●NCILAGA (d)
10—○BT. MWAMADI (h21)
11—△DOUGLAS (mo)
12—○UCINGAMILE (u, h23)
13—○ANGALIUNGOSWE (u, h23)
14—○APANJISYEJE (u, h22)
15—△ASINOSI (u, h22)
16—○AWINJI (u, h22)
17—○? (u, h22)
6—●? (d)
7—▲? (d)
8—●? (d)
18—△TWAIBU (lm)
19—△ALENGA (lm)
20—●? (d)
21—▲? (d)
22—△? (u, lm)
23—△? (u, lm)
24—●? (d)
25—○AKANENA (u, h44)
26—△? (u, h44)
27—●? (d)
28—●? (d)
29—▲? (d)
30—○? (u, h45)
31—△BULABU (u, h4)

[End chart 3d]

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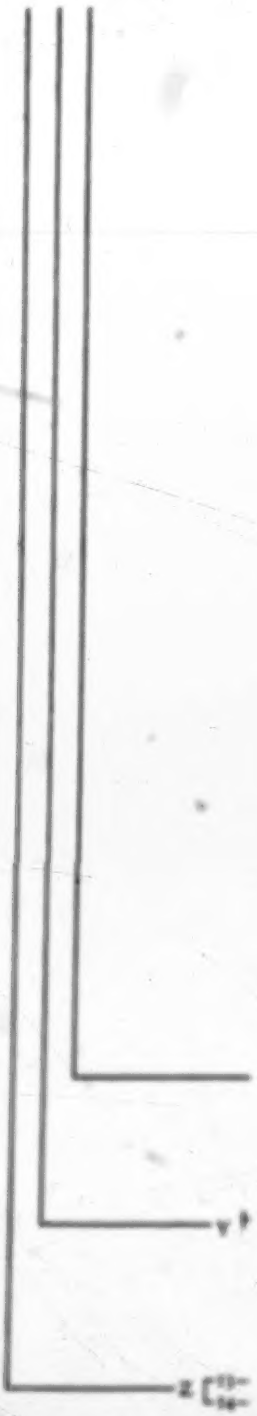

Divisions numbered in CAPITALS
Hut numbers in brackets after names

Other symbols :—
d = dead
mo = married out
lm = labour migrant
u = below age of puberty
mi = migrated
k = kitchen
KAR = King's African Rifles

[End chart 3a]

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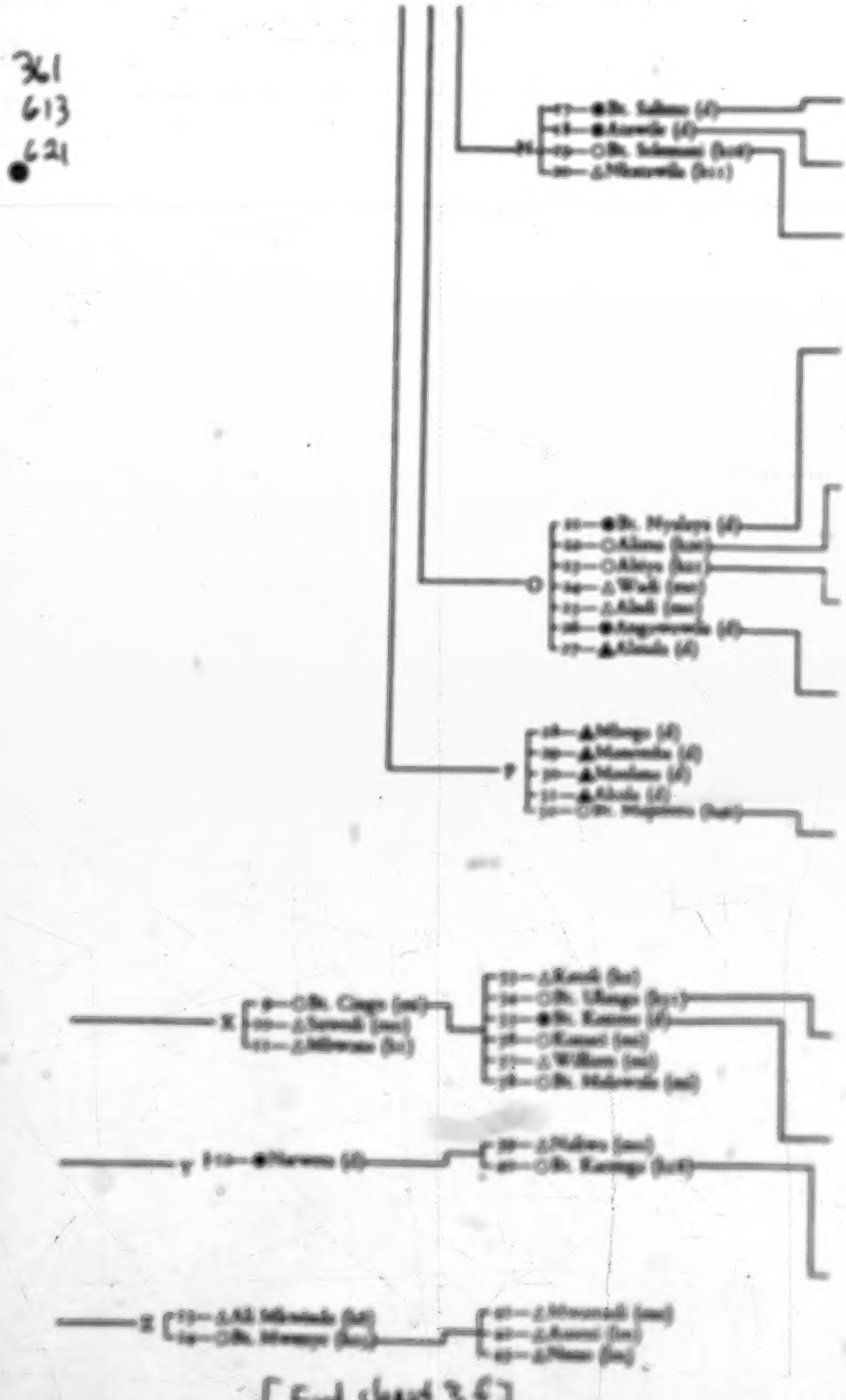
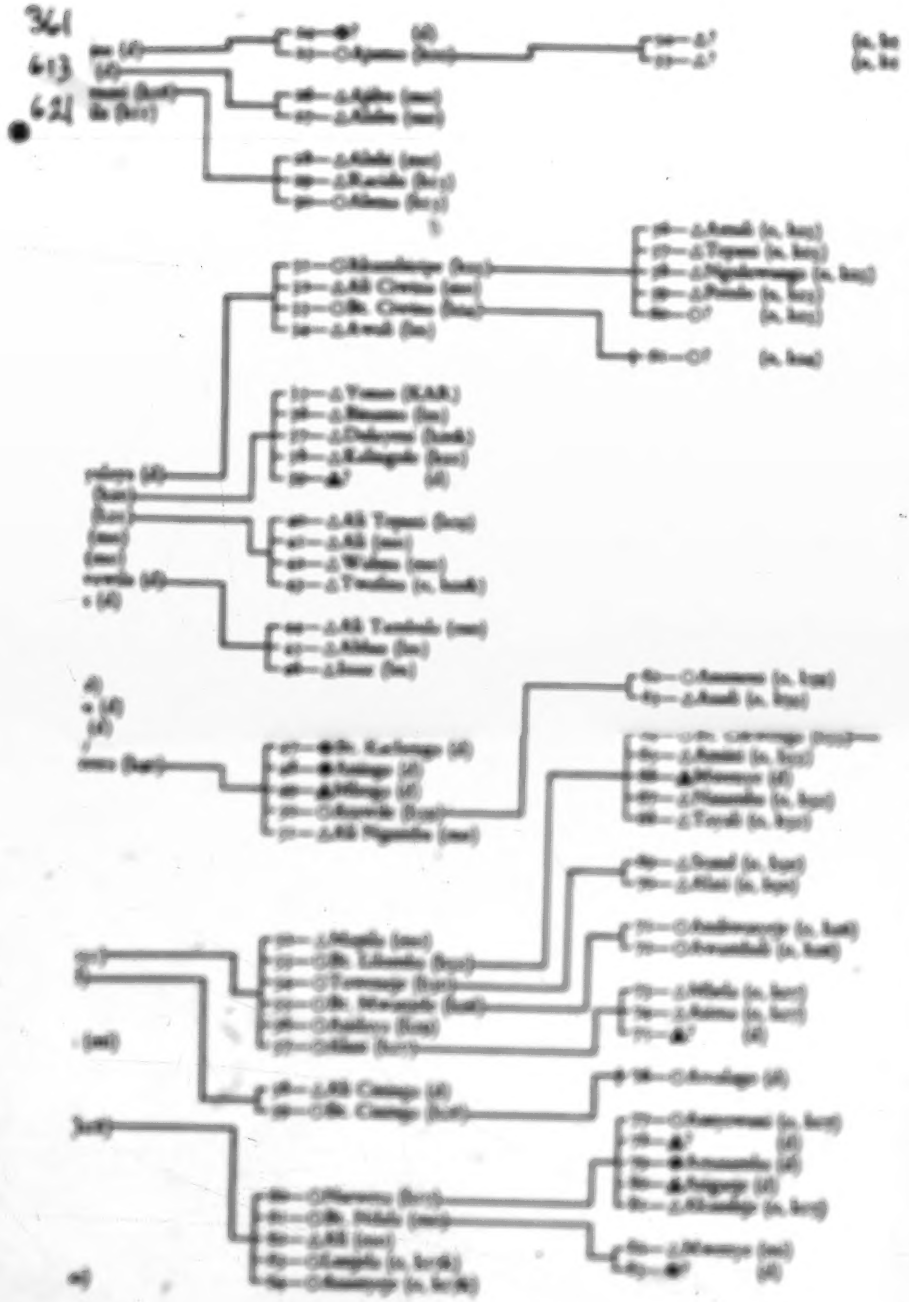
621



[End chart 36]

2: Mitchell E-5 (1948-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7



[End chart 3g]

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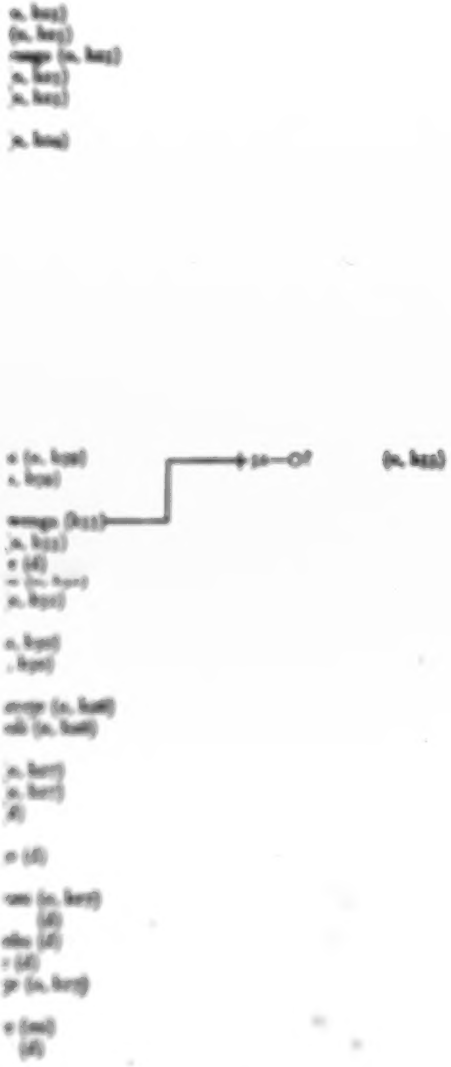

[End chart 34]

5: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1948) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7

ship. The difficulties of his position are brought home to the neophyte village headman in speeches made by old and experienced men. On one such occasion I heard a man say, 'Some men who marry into a village are bad and can split a village like this one by telling lies to the headman, saying that his sisters are talking behind his back and are insulting him. When a headman hears all this he might break his village by ill-treating his relatives, thus causing himself to be left all alone.' In this way the headman's responsibility for maintaining harmonious relations between the members of the village and himself is emphasized. His failure to do so results in what they call a break in the village—the departure of some of the members to live elsewhere—which is a severe blow to the status of the headman. In fact, he is dependent on his dependants for status, and the Yao are quick to point this out to neophyte headmen, saying, 'A tree cannot grow without branches.'

We can better understand the situation if we consider the social structure of the Yao village a little more closely. The Yao are a matrilineal people and are dominantly matrilocal. They live in small groups of huts scattered fairly evenly over the country and from a few hundred yards to possibly a mile or so apart. Such clusters may contain as few as five or as many as sixty or more huts, occupied by between 20 and 200 people.

These people are almost always kinsfolk, and in the smaller villages they are usually all either matrilineal descendants of a common ancestress or their spouses. In the larger groups there is a more complex situation which I shall analyse below. In the simpler groups there may be no male matrilineal descendant in the village and the leadership of the group is taken over by a senior female descendant of the founder of the village. Usually, however, if the group is large, one of the male matrilineal descendants lives patrilocally in the village and assumes leadership.

The relationship between a male matrilineal descendant and the female matrilineal descendants who are in his charge is signified by the word '*ukamba*'. The word particularly refers to the relationship between a man and his sisters and I have therefore translated it as 'sorority-group'. It includes a man's full sisters, matrilineal female collaterals (whom he calls sisters), their female children, and the female children of those female children, and so on. It is usually used in the sense of 'somebody's sorority-group'. A man belonging to the descent-group of the sorority-group may refer to these women as 'our sorority-group'. The man who is in charge of the sorority-group is referred to as the *ajuwe ukamba*. This could be translated as 'owner of the sorority-group' but because of the property associations with the word 'owner' in our language, I have instead translated this as 'warden of the sorority-group' which expresses more accurately the relationship between a man and his female relatives. Even in those groups where there is a female in charge of the village and no male matrilineal descendant is resident in the group, there is usually some one man, possibly married in some other village, who is warden of the sorority-group. The warden of a sorority-group has certain precise duties to perform on behalf of his charges. First, he is concerned with the good relations between members of the sorority-group and with other such groups. He has to settle most of the domestic quarrels that take place between members of the sorority-groups. Second, and this is considered to be a most important function, he is the person who is the

marriage-money for the marriages of the members of the group. Briefly this means that he must be approached before a marriage can be legally contracted by any member of his charge, he or his representative is present at the ceremony which formally consecrates the marriage, and he is responsible for the behaviour of his female relatives in their marriage. Third, he is immediately concerned with the physical welfare and health of his security-group. He must track down the sorcerers causing their illnesses and supply the medicine to heal them. He has to arrange for the ritual purification of mourners after the death of one of the security-group's members. Fourth, he must be present in the court-house if one of his charges is involved in a case and he is usually looked to for the money for the fine. I have known a case not to begin because the warden of the security-group was not present. Frequently if the husbands of the female members of his charge default, he has to provide the bail-fee money.

Usually the warden of the security-group is the eldest brother of a group of adult full sisters. The younger brothers of the group of sisters, while concerned with their welfare, do not stand in this particular responsible position. They refer to the security-group as "*our* security-group". The elder brother refers to the security-group, be it noted, as "*my* security-group", and this sets him over and against his younger brothers. The position that the warden holds, however, is not rigidly fixed, for a younger brother may assume control of the security-group if for some reason he is dissatisfied with the way in which affairs are being conducted, and is able so to assert himself.

If we recall that the status of a man in a Yao community is determined by the members of dependants that he can command, it is easy to see that relationships between an elder brother and his younger brother are distinctive. The elder brother is responsible for the actions of his younger brother in much the same way as he is for one of his security-group, and the younger brothers have a great emotional attachment to their elder brothers. Yet at the same time the elder brother stands in the way of the younger brother in his striving for status, in that while the elder brother is warden of the security-group the younger brother cannot be, and therefore cannot have dependants and status. It is not surprising to find that accusations of sorcery are frequently made between brothers and the result often is that the younger brother takes the security-group away from his sorcerer brother to some other place and sets up a new village with it. Therefore, one possible source of instability in a Yao village lies in the operation of the kinship system in a system of values which embraces status by adherents.

I have thus far been describing the simpler types of village. In the larger groups it is common for the warden of the security-group to live in the village where his security-group is. There he usually brings one (or sometimes more) of his wives to the village, where she lives patrilocally. The daughters that are born to her do not return to the security-group from which the headman's wife came but marry and set up households near their mother in the village of their father. Thus there develops in time a second security-group in the village, alongside the first security-group, and related to it through the headman. At this point we may say that the man's position has changed from that of headman of a village containing a single security-group, to the more complicated and less secure one of village headman over a more hetero-

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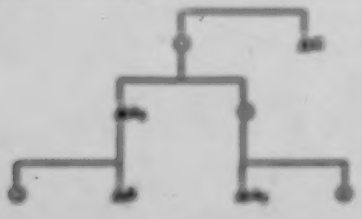
genous group, in which his jurisdiction over one part of the village arises from his position as the warden of a sorority-group, and that which he exercises over the other sorority-group derives partly from his position as a non-matrilineal relative and partly from his own personal qualities. The warden of the second sorority-group is the headman's own son and it is he who takes over all the functions proper to that position, but the successor to the headmanship is a man's sister's son, usually, though not inevitably, the first-born son of the eldest sister. Each village headman in turn brings his wife to live in his village and each headman's wife in turn tends to set up a fresh group which is of a different lineage affiliation from that of the headman. In addition to this the warden of the sorority-group formed from the first headman's children tends in due course to live patrilocally and the children of his wife set up yet another foreign group in the village. Hence, theoretically, with each generation the number of opposed groups in a village doubles itself, and in a few generations, were this to continue, the position would become extremely complex. In fact a village of long standing is seen to be composed of a central lineage group to which the headman belongs, and a series of other lineage groups related to the headman's lineage group through one or other of the past and present headmen of that village. Such groups of different lineage make-up are usually mutually opposed and are held together only by the combined influences of a weak patrilineal connexion with the headman's lineage and the personality of the present headman.

This situation is clearly an uneasy one for the headman. His wife is looked upon as a stranger and is often made to feel it. The headman's sorority-group often expresses its hostility and jealousy towards her. The children of the two groups are on no easier terms. They call each other "cross-cousin" (*jaisewe*) and are expected to marry one another. At the same time the hostility between them is formulated in joking relationships. This critical situation of the headman is made clear to him on the day of his succession. One headman was told: "As you have got wives, do not listen to what they say. They may be lying. Sometimes they will quarrel with your sisters and say that your sisters have been insulting you. This is false. When you hear these reports you may be unfair to your sisters and the people will say that you have broken your village through listening to nonsense." Thus when conflicts arise between members of a village the headman is in a peculiar position and it is difficult for him to remain impartial. In such a situation the tendency is to call in an outsider to try to settle the differences. Sometimes these differences are patched up and the village continues as a unit. But, particularly after the death of the first village headman, the tendency is for one of the groups to move away to a completely new area, there to set up a unit of its own.

I quote an actual case to illustrate this procedure:



"In 1946 village A had about 30 huts in it. A certain man B was the son of the previous headman called A_1 and hence mother's brother's son or cross-cousin of the present headman called A_2. B had two wives living patrilocally and while B was serving in the Army he had a letter from one of his sisters (i.e. his mother's brother's daughter or cross-cousin to the headman) to say that A_2 was sleeping with B's wives. When B returned he started making inquiries from his wives and he eventually secured a confession from them. B then went to a man called C, who stood in the relationship of mother's brother to the original A_2 and complained about the behaviour of the village headman. C also instituted inquiries and ascertained that it was true. C then approached a local headman of some standing (whom I shall call D) and asked him to arbitrate in the case. D pronounced A_2 guilty and awarded compensation of £5. 10s. to B. B, however, refused to take the money, and said that he wished to leave the village. D observed that he had every right to do this and that A_2 had no right to complain 'since he had broken the village himself'. B took his security-group, who comprised about twenty of the thirty huts, to a place about thirty miles away and set up a village of his own. The security-group of the village headman A_2 remained behind in the old village."

This case illustrates the points that I have made. It shows how the two groups in this village stood opposed to each other in that B's sister wrote to tell him of A_2's conduct. Also when the village did break up it did so along certain very clear lines of genealogical relationship. Second, it illustrates the operation of the desire for dependence in that B refused what by Yao standards is a very large sum of money in compensation and preferred to move off and establish a village of his own. This attitude is also shown by the arbitrator who takes the point of view that regrettable as it is, the village must in the circumstances split, and while he appreciates the headman's feelings he makes it clear that the headman has no one to blame but himself. Third, it is interesting to note that this split took place after the death of the old village headman when the personal ties with both opposed groups were severed. Though the new village headman A_2 assumes the kinship terms of his predecessor and also calls the children of A_1 'children' yet in fact he is their cross-cousin while the old village headman was their father.

The position of the village headman in Yao social structure may be summarized thus: the village headman is the leader of a group which may be a simple kin-group or a composite group of two or more opposed matrilineages linked to each other through himself or one of his predecessors whom he represents to them. The numerical size of the village determines the status of the headman, but the size that it can reach is limited by an inherent instability in the kinship structure which is expressed, in terms of their status system, first, in the competition of brothers for the membership of the security-group, and second, in the competition between the headman and the members of the patrilineally linked security-groups, who wish to set up villages of their own.

The Yao are village-conscious and this is clearly shown at the initiation ceremonies of boys, where the initiates are kept in grass-sheds, each partition of which refers to a particular village. In the same way a person is identified as belonging to a particular village known by the name of the village headman. Thus a man might say: "I come from Kumpumbe's village."

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Village headmen themselves are graded in importance and there are certain marks of rank which distinguish the more important headmen. We have already mentioned one of the most obvious ways in which the village headman's importance is judged, that is, by the number of people in his village. In addition there are other ways in which village headmen may be distinguished both from the commoner people and from less important headmen. Thus, for example, some of the more important village headmen have the right to conduct initiation ceremonies, this right being granted to them by the man who is in a way the most important village headman of all—the Chief. The right to hold a boys' initiation ceremony (*lipando*) is of more importance than the right to hold a girls' initiation ceremony (*chiputi*). Yet another mark of rank is the right to wear a plain crimson band around the forehead (*mkanda*), this right also being granted by the Chief.

The Administration has recognized the more important village headmen and has entrusted to them certain duties. By no means all the people called 'village headmen' in this paper are recognized as such by the Administration, but I do not know of any person who has the right to wear a red band and is not also an Administrative village headman.

The status system has apparently been taken over from pre-European days, but it is uncertain to what extent these important village headmen had powers. Some to-day have all the marks of rank that the Chief has, i.e., they hold both boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies, are entitled to the special greeting accorded to important village headmen (*mkulu*), wear a red band, have the right to be buried in the village and not in the commoner cemeteries, and to have their bodies prepared for interment by people of similar rank. It appears that such people exercised a certain amount of power, by reason of their personal qualities, over less powerful neighbours, and some were able in the past to demonstrate their supremacy by moving off to establish petty chiefdoms of their own.

Nowadays the Administrative village headmen have certain necessary duties to perform towards other minor groups actually independent but considered, for the purposes of the Administration, to belong to the village. The relative importance of the headmen is still the deciding factor in such questions as determining who is to be called in to arbitrate in a case. Thus, though for Administrative purposes a small village may be considered to be a part of a larger Administrative village under an Administrative village headman, yet when a case for arbitration occurs within that smaller village, some other person than the Administrative village headman may be called in as arbitrator.

Laws promulgated by the Administration are conveyed through the Chief to the Administrative village headmen and in this way a hierarchy of power is being introduced. The small village headmen now see the Administrative village headmen as a representative of the Chief and the Administration. The Administrative village headmen in turn see the Chief in this light. But in matters directly affecting the Administration, the small village headmen also see the Administrative village headmen as his own representative set-up between the Chief and the Administration.

In general the village is by far the most important corporate body in the social organization of the Yao, not only as a significant primary group but also as an element

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in the political sphere. The position of the village headman therefore is of cardinal importance and merits further study.

III. THE PORT JAMESON NGONI

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[P. 141 B]

[1] The people with whom this paper is concerned[1] occupy that part of Nyasaland between the Chikala Range in the South; Mount Mangoche in the North; the Shire River to the West; and the Portuguese East African border to the East. This area is represented on the accompanying diagrammatic map. A more detailed description of the general social organization of the Yao in this area, and of their history and general cultural background is to be published shortly.[2] At [36] this point it is sufficient to say that the Yao are semi-subsistence cultivators living in village settlements ranging from a few huts to sixty or more, with an average of about twelve. This represents say a population average of about 40 per village but ranging from 15 to over 200. [62] Those village settlements are inhabited by groups [61] of kinsmen. In general there is a matrilineal core [62] of kinsmen of whom the village headman, who has the same name as the village, is one. In some more complete villages there are subsidiary matri-lineages related to the matrilineal core agnatically

[P.141C]

(2) through one or other incumbent of the position
of village headman.[2] Succession to posts of author-
(1) ity, including that of the chief, is matrilineal.
(22 Ideally the succession should pass to the first-
born son of a man's eldest sister, but this is not
always followed, for the personal qualities of the
successor are more important.

(6) The total African population of the area studied
is 65,000. There are one or two Indian traders
and two Europeans permanently resident in
the area. One European is a missionary in the
north-east corner and the other an Agricultural
officer in the north centre of the area. Part of
(3) the area is administered by the District Commis-
sioner, Zomba, and part by District Commis-
sioner, Fort Johnston, and these officers tour
the districts under their jurisdiction. Occasionally
other White officials and labour recruiters appear,
but in the main, Whites are not often seen in this
(4) area. The one road traversing it is usually impass-
able for a part of the rainy season.

563 to be initiated according to the Yao custom (*lupunde*). In general, the Nguru headmen are village headmen in the same way as the Yao are and they follow the same pattern in political behaviour.

563 At the moment, throughout the area, the
621 various tribal groups live in kinship clusters as
● their under one Yao administrative headman
there may be two or three unrelated Yao kin-
groups and possibly one or two Nguru groups
living quite separately. Though the population
in the area as a whole is mixed, usually the village
groups are tribally homogeneous. So far little
inter-marriage has taken place. I shall not here
analyse this situation, though it is politically
pregnant. In many ways the Nguru immigrants
711 are more progressive than the Yao. Most Yao in
this area are professed Moslems and do not
attend the local schools which are Christian.
However, the missions here have been more successful
among the Nguru and they are becoming more
educated and advanced. A good proportion of
the Government posts in the area is filled by
Nguru for this reason. This is most significant
in the context of the general situation as will
become apparent in the description below. For
the rest of the paper I shall consider the political
structure as I see it, in terms of the social personalities in the structure, and the presence of these
non-Yao groups is implicit in the case of this
analysis.

V. The Political Structure

449 the Administration has persuaded the chief to
462 pass and the full significance of which lies in
177 a system of European values. These systems of
values are foreign to each other in many features.
Opposition between the two groups, White and
Black, must arise if their behaviour is affected
by different sets of values. The Yao, for example,
believe that most deaths are caused by sorcery
and claim the right to take punitive measures
against the sorcerers. The Whites do not believe
in this and prevent punitive action against people